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THE
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Translated by
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MDCCLXXI.



A
G E N E R A L , V I E W
O F T H E
E P I C K P O E M,
A N D O F T H E
I L I A D a n d O D Y S S E Y.

Extracted from BOSSU.

S E C T. I.

THE fables of poets were originally employed in representing the Divine Nature^a, according to the notion then conceived of it. This sublime subject occasioned the first poets to be called Divines, and Poetry the *Language of the Gods*. They divided the divine attributes into so many persons; because the infirmity of a human mind cannot sufficiently conceive, or explain, so much power and action in a simplicity so great and indivisible as that of God. And perhaps they were also jealous of the advantages they reaped from such excellent and exalted learning, and of which they thought the vulgar part of mankind was not worthy.

They could not describe the operations of this Almighty Cause, without speaking at the same time of

^a Of the Nature of Epick Poetry.

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its effects: so that to Divinity, they added *Physiology*, and treated of both, without quitting the umbrages of their allegorical expressions.

But *man* being the chief and most noble of all that God produced, and nothing being so proper, or more useful to poets than this subject; they added it to the former, and treated of the doctrine of *morality* after the same manner as they did that of divinity and philosophy, and from morality thus treated, is formed that kind of poem and fable which we call *epick*.

The poets did the same in morality, that the divines had done in divinity. But that infinite variety of the actions and operations of the Divine Nature, (to which our understanding bears so small a proportion) did as it were force them upon dividing the single idea of the Only One God into several persons, under the different names of Jupiter, Juno, Neptune and the rest.

And on the other hand, the nature of moral philosophy being such, as never to treat of things in particular, but in general; the epick poets were obliged to unite in one single idea, in one and the same person, and in an action which appeared singular, all that looked like it in different persons and in various actions; which might be thus contained as so many *species* under their *genus*.

The presence of the Deity, and the care such an august cause is to be supposed to take about any action, obliges the poet to represent this action as great, important, and managed by ^b kings and princes. It

^b Res gestæ regumque ducumque. Hor. Art. Poet.

obliges him likewise to think and speak in an elevated way above the vulgar, and in a style that may in some sort keep up the character of the divine persons he introduces. * To this end serve the poetical and figurative expression, and the Majesty of the heroick verse.

But all this, being divine and surprising, may quite ruin all probability: therefore the poet should take a particular care as to that point, since his chief aim is to instruct, and without probability any action is less likely to persuade.

Lastly, since precepts ought to be ^d concise, to be the more easily conceived, and less oppress the memory; and since nothing can be more effectual to this end than proposing one single idea, and collecting all things so well together, as to be present to our minds all at once; therefore the poets have reduced all to one ^e single action, under one and the same design, and in a body whose members and parts should be homogeneous.

What we have observed of the nature of the Epick Poem, gives us a just idea of it, and we may define it thus:

“ The Epick Poem is a discourse invented by art,
“ to form the manners, by such instructions as are

* — — — Cui mens divini^{or} atque os
Magna sonaturum, des Nominis hujus honorem.
Horat.

• Quicquid præcipies esto brevis, ut cito dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.
Hor. Poet.

• Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, & unum.
Hor. Poet.

“ disguised under the allegories of some one important action, which is related in verse, after a probable, diverting, and surprizing manner.”

S E C T. II.

IN every design which a man deliberately undertakes, the end he proposes is the first thing in his mind, and that by which he governs the whole work, and all its parts: thus, since the end of the Epick Poem is to regulate the manners, it is with this first view the poet ought to begin.

But there is a great difference between the philosophical and the poetical doctrine of Manners. The schoolmen content themselves with treating of virtues and vices in general: the instructions they give are proper for all states, people, and for all ages. But the poet has a nearer regard to his own country, and the necessities of his own nation. With this design he makes choice of some piece of morality, the most proper and just he can imagine: and in order to press this home, he makes less use of the force of reasoning, than of the power of insinuation; accommodating himself to the particular customs and inclinations of those, who are to be the subject, or the readers, of his work.

Let us now see how Homer has acquitted himself in these respects.

He saw the Grecians, for whom he designed his poem, were divided into as many states as they had capital cities. Each was a body politick apart, and had its form of government independent from all the

^f The fable of the Iliad.

rest. And yet these distinct states were very often obliged to unite together in one body against their common enemies. These were two very different sorts of government, such as could not be comprehended in one maxim of morality, and in one single poem.

The poet therefore has made two distinct fables of them. The one is for Greece in general, united into one body, but composed of parts independent on each other; and the other for each particular state, considered as they were in time of peace, without the former circumstances and the necessity of being united.

As for the first sort of government, in the union or rather in the confederacy of many independent states; experience has always made it appear, "That nothing so much causes success as a due subordination, and a right understanding among the chief commanders. And on the other hand, the inevitable ruin of such confederacies proceeds from the heats, jealousies, and ambition of the different leaders, and the discontents of submitting to a single general." All sorts of states, and in particular the Grecians, had dearly experienced this truth. So that the most useful and necessary instruction that could be given them, was, to lay before their eyes, the loss which both the people and the princes must of necessity suffer, by the ambition, discord, and obstinacy of the latter.

Homer then has taken for the foundation of his fable this great truth; That a misunderstanding be-

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tween princes is the ruin of their own states. " I
" sing (says he) the anger of Achilles, so pernicious
" to the Grecians, and the cause of so many heroes
" deaths, occasioned by the discord and separation
" of Agamemnon and that prince."

But that this truth may be compleatly and fully known, there is need of a second to support it. It is necessary in such a design, not only to represent the confederate states at first disagreeing among themselves, and from thence unfortunate; but to show the same states afterwards reconciled and united, and of consequence victorious.

Let us now see how he has joined all these in one general action.

" Several princes independent on one another
" were united against a common enemy. The person whom they had elected their general, offers an
" affront to the most valiant of all the confederates.
" This offended prince is so far provoked, as to relinquish the union, and obstinately refuse to fight
" for the common cause. This misunderstanding
" gives the enemy such an advantage, that the allies
" are very near quitting their design with dishonour.
" He himself who made the separation, is not exempt from sharing the misfortune which he
" brought upon his party. For having permitted
" his intimate friend to succour them in a great necessity, this friend is killed by the enemy's general. Thus the contending princes being both made
" wiser at their own cost, are reconciled, and unite
" again: then this valiant prince not only obtains
" the victory in the publick cause, but revenges his

and of the ILIAD and ODYSSEY. ✱

“ private wrongs by killing with his own hands
“ the author of the death of his friend.”

This is the first platform of the poem, and the fiction which reduces into one important and universal action all the particulars upon which it turns.

In the next place it must be rendered probable by the circumstances of times, places, and persons: some persons must be found out, already known by history or otherwise, whom we may with probability make the actors and personages of this fable. Homer has made choice of the siege of Troy, and feigned that this action happened there. To a phantom of his brain, whom he would paint valiant and cholerick, he has given the name of Achilles; that of Agamemnon to his general; that of Hector to the enemy's commander, and so to the rest.

Besides, he was obliged to accommodate himself to the manners, customs, and genius of the Greeks his auditors, the better to make them attend to the instruction of his poem: and to gain their approbation by praising them: so that they might the better forgive him the representation of their own faults in some of his chief personages. He admirably discharges all these duties, by making these brave princes and those victorious people all Grecians, and the fathers of those he had a mind to commend.

But not being content, in a work of such a length, to propose only the principal point of the moral, and to fill up the rest with useless ornaments and foreign incidents, he extends this moral by all its necessary consequences. As for instance, in the subject be-

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fore us, it is not enough to know, that a good understanding ought always to be maintained among confederates : it is likewise of equal importance, that if there happens any division, care must be taken to keep it secret from the enemy, that their ignorance of this advantage may prevent their making use of it. And in the second place, when their concord is but counterfeit and only in appearance, one should never press the enemy too closely ; for this would discover the weakness which we ought to conceal from them.

The episode of Patroclus most admirably furnishes us with these two instructions. For when he appeared in the arms of Achilles, the Trojans, who took him for that prince now reconciled and united to the confederates, immediately gave ground, and quitted the advantages they had before over the Greeks. But Patroclus, who should have been contented with this success, presses upon Hector too boldly, and by obliging him to fight, soon discovers that it was not the true Achilles who was clad in his armour, but a hero of much inferior prowess. So that Hector kills him, and regains those advantages which the Trojans had lost, on the opinion that Achilles was reconciled.

S E C T. III.

TH E * Odyſſey was not designed, like the Iliad, for the instruction of all the states of Greece joined in one body, but for each state in particular. As a state is composed of two parts ; the head which commands, and the members which obey ; there

* The fable of the Odyſſey.

are instructions requisite to both, to teach the one to govern, and the others to submit to government.

There are two virtues necessary to one in authority, prudence to order, and care to see his orders put in execution. The prudence of a politician is not acquired but by a long experience in all sorts of business, and by an acquaintance with all the different forms of governments and states. The care of the administration suffers not him that has the government to rely upon others, but requires his own presence: and kings who are absent from their states, are in danger of losing them, and give occasion to great disorders and confusion.

These two points may be easily united in one and the same man. “ A king forsakes his kingdom to visit the courts of several princes, where he learns the manners and customs of different nations. From hence there naturally arises a vast number of incidents, of dangers, and of adventures, very useful for a political institution. On the other side, this absence gives way to the disorders which happen in his own kingdom, and which end not till his return, whose presence only can re-establish all things.” Thus the absence of a king has the same effects in this fable, as the division of the princes had in the former.

The subjects have scarce any need but of one general maxim, which is, to suffer themselves to be governed, and to obey faithfully; whatever reason they may imagine against the orders they receive. It is easy to join this instruction with the other, by bestowing on this wise and industrious prince such

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subjects, as in his absence would rather follow their own judgment than his commands ; and by demonstrating the misfortunes which this disobedience draws upon them, the evil consequences which almost infallibly attend these particular notions, which are intirely different from the general idea of him who ought to govern.

But as it was necessary that the princes in the *Iliad* should be cholerick and quarrelsome, so it is necessary in the fable of the *Odysey* that the chief person should be sage and prudent. This raises a difficulty in the fiction ; because this person ought to be absent for the two reasons aforementioned, which are essential to the fable, and which constitute the principal aim of it : but he cannot absent himself, without offending against another maxim of equal importance, viz. That a king should upon no account leave his country.

It is true, there are sometimes such necessities as sufficiently excuse the prudence of a politician in this point. But such a necessity is a thing important enough of itself to supply matter for another poem, and this multiplication of the action would be vicious. To prevent which, in the first place, this necessity, and the departure of the hero must be disjoined from the poem ; and in the second place, the hero having been obliged to absent himself, for a reason antecedent to the action, and placed distinct from the fable, he ought not so far to embrace this opportunity of instructing himself, as to absent himself voluntarily from his own government. For at this rate, his absence would be merely volun-

tary, and one might with reason lay to his charge all the disorders which might arise.

Thus in the constitution of the fable he ought not to take for his action, and for the foundation of his poem, the departure of a prince from his own country, nor his voluntary stay in any other place ; but his return, and this return retarded against his will. This is the first idea Homer gives us of it. ^h His hero appears at first in a desolate island, sitting upon the side of the sea, which with tears in his eyes he looks upon as the obstacle that had so long opposed his return, and detained him from revisiting his own dear country.

And lastly, since this forced delay might more naturally and usually happen to such as make voyages by sea ; Homer has judiciously made choice of a prince whose kingdom was in an island.

Let us see then how he has feigned all this action, making his hero a person in years, because years are requisite to instruct a man in prudence and policy.

“ A prince had been obliged to forsake his native country, and to head an army of his subjects in a foreign expedition. Having gloriously performed this enterprize, he was marching home again, and conducting his subjects to his own state. But spite of all the attempts, with which the eagerness to return had inspired him, he was stoppt by the way by tempests for several years, and cast upon several countries differing from each other in manners and government. In these dangers his companions, not always following his orders, perished through their own fault. The

^h *Odyfsey*, v.

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“ grandees of his country strangely abuse his ab-
“ fence, and raise no small disorders at home. They
“ consume his estate, conspire to destroy his son,
“ would constrain his queen to accept of one of
“ them for her husband; and indulge themselves
“ in all violence, so much the more, because they
“ were persuaded he would never return. But at
“ last he returns, and discovering himself only to
“ his son and some others, who had continued firm
“ to him, he is an eye-witness of the insolence of
“ his enemies, punishes them according to their
“ deserts, and restores to his island that tranquillity
“ and repose to which they had been strangers
“ during his absence.”

As the truth, which serves for foundation to this fiction, is, that the absence of a person from his own home, or his neglect of his own affairs, is the cause of great disorders: so the principal point of the action, and the most essential one, is the absence of the hero. This fills almost all the poem: for not only this real absence lasted several years, but even when the hero returned, he does not discover himself; and this prudent disguise, from whence he reaped so much advantage, has the same effect upon the authors of the disorders, and all others who knew him not, as his real absence had before, so that he is absent as to them, till the very moment of their punishment.

After the poet had thus composed his fable, and joined the fiction to the truth, he then makes choice of Ulysses, the king of the isle of Ithaca, to maintain the character of his chief personage, and bestowed the rest upon Telemachus, Penelope, An-

tinous, and others, whom he calls by what names he pleases.

I shall not here insist upon the many excellent advices, which are so many parts and natural consequences of the fundamental truth ; and which the poet very dextrously lays down in those fictions which are the episodes and members of the entire action. Such for instance are these advices : not to intrude one's self into the mysteries of government, which the prince keeps secret ; this is represented to us by the winds shut up in a bull-hide, which the miserable companions of Ulysses would needs be so foolish as to pry into. Not to suffer one's self to be led away by the seeming charms of an idle and inactive life, to which the Sirens song invitedⁱ. Not to suffer one's self to be sensualized by pleasures, like those who were changed into brutes by Circe: and a great many other points of morality necessary for all sorts of people.

This poem is more useful to the people than the Iliad, where the subjects suffer rather by the ill conduct of their princes, than through their own mis-carriages. But in the Odyssey, it is not the fault of Ulysses that is the ruin of his subjects. This wise prince leaves untried no method to make them partakers of the benefit of his return. Thus the poet in the Iliad says, " He sings the anger of Achilles, which had caused the death of so many Grecians ;" and on the contrary, in the^k Odyf-

ⁱ Improbæ Siren desidîa. Horat.

^k Αὐτῶν γὰρ ῥαπτερίῃσι ἀτασθαλέῃσι ὄλοντο.

Odyss. i.

ſay he tells his readers, “ That the ſubjects periſhed
“ through their own fault.”

S E C T. IV.

A RISTOTLE ¹ beſtows great encomiums upon Homer for the ſimplicity of his deſign, becauſe he has included in one ſingle part all that happened at the ſiege of Troy. And to this he oppoſes the ignorance of ſome poets, who imagined that the unity of the fable or action was ſufficiently preſerved by the unity of the hero; and who compoſed their Theſeids; Heracleids, and the like, wherein they only heaped up in one poem every thing that happened to one perſonage.

He finds fault with thoſe poets who were for reducing the unity of the Fable into the unity of the hero, becauſe one man may have performed ſeveral adventures, which it is impoſſible to reduce under any one general and ſimple head. This reducing of all things to unity and ſimplicity is what Horace likewiſe makes his firſt rule.

“ Denique ſit quodvis ſimplex duntaxat, & unum.”

According to theſe rules, it will be allowable to make uſe of ſeveral fables; (or to ſpeak more correctly) of ſeveral incidents which may be divided into ſeveral fables, provided they are ſo ordered, that the unity of the fable be not ſpoiled. This liberty is ſtill greater in the epick poem, becauſe it is of a larger extent, and ought to be entire and compleat.

¹ Of the unity of the Fable.

I will explain myself more distinctly by the practice of Homer.

No doubt but one might make four distinct fables out of these four following instructions.

1. *Division between those of the same party exposes them entirely to their enemies.*

2. *Conceal your weakness, and you will be dreaded as much, as if you had none of those imperfections, of which they are ignorant.*

3. *When your strength is only feigned, and founded only in the opinion of others; never venture so far as if your strength was real.*

4. *The more you agree together, the less hurt can your enemies do you.*

It is plain, I say, that each of these particular maxims might serve for the ground-work of a fiction, and one might make four distinct fables out of them. May not one then put all these into one single *Epopæa*? Not unless one single fable can be made out of all. The poet indeed may have so much skill as to unite all into one body, as members and parts, each of which taken asunder would be imperfect; and if he joins them so, this conjunction shall be no hindrance at all to the unity and the regular simplicity of the fable. This is what Homer has done with such success in the composition of the *Iliad*.

1. *The Division between Achilles and his Allies tended to the ruin of their Designs.* 2. *Patroclus comes to their relief in the armour of this hero, and Hector retreats.* 3. *But this young man pushing the advantage which his disguise gave him, too far, ventures to engage with*

Heſtor himſelf; but not being maſter of Achilles's ſtrength (whom he only repreſented in outward appearance) he is killed, and by this means leaves the Grecian affairs in the ſame diſorder, from which in that diſguiſe he came to free them. 4. *Achilles provoked at the death of his friend, is reconciled, and revenges his loſs by the death of Heſtor.* Theſe various incidents being thus united, do not make different actions and fables, but are only the uncompleat and unfiniſhed parts of one and the ſame action and fable, which alone when taken thus complexly, can be ſaid to be compleat and entire: and all theſe maxims of the moral, are eaſily reduced into theſe two parts, which in my opinion cannot be ſeparated without enervating the force of both. The two parts are theſe, ^m That a right underſtanding is the preſervation, and diſcord the deſtruction of ſtates.

Though then the poet has made uſe of two parts in his poems, each of which might have ſerved for a fable, as we have obſerved: yet this multiplication cannot be called a vicious and irregular Polymythia, contrary to the neceſſary unity and ſimplicity of the fable; but it gives the fable another qualification, altogether neceſſary and regular, namely, its perfection and finiſhing ſtroke.

S E C T. V.

THE ⁿ action of a poem is the ſubject which the poet undertakes, propoſes, and builds upon. So that the moral and the inſtructions which are the end

^m *Concordiâ res parvæ creſcunt: diſcordiâ magnæ dilabuntur.* Salluſt. de bello Jug.

ⁿ Of the action of the Epick Poem.

and of the ILIAD and ODYSSEY. xix

of the epick poem are not the matter of it. Those the poets leave in their allegorical and figurative obscurity. They only give notice at the *exordium*, that they sing some *action*. *The Revenge of Achilles, the Return of Ulysses, &c.*

Since then the action is the matter of a fable, it is evident that whatever incidents are essential to the fable, or constitute a part of it, are necessary also to the action, and are parts of the epick matter, none of which ought to be omitted. Such, for instance, are the contention of Agamemnon and Achilles, the slaughter Hector makes in the Grecian army, the re-union of the Greek princes; and lastly, the re-settlement and victory which was the consequence of that re-union.

There are four qualifications in the epick action: the first is its *unity*, the second its *integrity*, the third its *importance*, the fourth its *duration*.

The unity of the epick action, as well as the unity of the fable, does not consist either in the unity of the hero, or in the unity of time: three things I suppose are necessary to it. The first is, to make use of no episode, but what arises from the very platform and foundation of the action, and is as it were a natural member of the body. The second is, exactly to unite these episodes and these members with one another. And the third is, never to finish any episode so as it may seem to be an entire action; but to let each episode still appear in its own particular nature, as the member of a body, and as a part of itself not compleat.

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° Aristotle not only says that the epick action should be one, but adds, that it should be entire, perfect and compleat, and for this purpose ought to have a *beginning*, a *middle*, and an *end*. These three parts of a whole are too generally and universally denoted by the words, beginning, middle, and end; we may interpret them more precisely, and say, That the causes and designs of an action are the beginning: that the effects of these causes, and the difficulties that are met with in the execution of these designs, are the middle; and that the unravelling and resolution of these difficulties are the end.

▷ Homer's design in the Iliad, is to relate the anger and revenge of Achilles. The beginning of this action is the change of Achilles from a calm to a passionate temper. The middle is the effects of his passion, and all the illustrious deaths it is the cause of. The end of this same action is the return of Achilles to his calmness of temper again. All was quiet in the Grecian camp, when Agamemnon their general provokes Apollo against them, whom he was willing to appease afterwards at the cost and prejudice of Achilles, who had no part in his fault. This then is an exact beginning: it supposes nothing before, and requires after it the effects of this anger. Achilles revenges himself, and that is an exact middle; it supposes before it the anger of Achilles, this revenge is the effect of it. Then this middle

° Of the beginning, middle, and end of the action.

▷ The action of the Iliad.

requires after it the effects of this revenge, which is the satisfaction of Achilles: for the revenge had not been compleat, unless Achilles had been satisfied. By this means the poet makes his hero, after he was glutted by the mischief he had done to Agamemnon, by the death of Hector, and the honour he did his friend, by insulting over his murderer; he makes him, I say, to be moved by the tears and misfortunes of king Priam. We see him as calm at the end of the poem, during the funeral of Hector, as he was at the beginning of the poem, whilst the plague raged among the Grecians. This end is just, since the calmness of temper Achilles re-enjoyed, is only an effect of the revenge which ought to have preceded: and after this no body expects any more of his anger. Thus has Homer been very exact in the beginning, middle, and end of the action he made choice of for the subject of his Iliad.

^a His design in the Odyssey was to describe the return of Ulysses from the siege of Troy, and his arrival at Ithaca. He opens this poem with the complaints of Minerva against Neptune, who opposed the return of this hero, and against Calypso, who detained him in an island from Ithaca. Is this a beginning? no; doubtless, the reader would know why Neptune is displeased with Ulysses, and how this prince came to be with Calypso? He would know how he came from Troy thither? The poet answers his demands out of the mouth of Ulysses himself, who

^a The action of the Odyssey.

relates these things, and begins the action by the recital of his travels from the city of Troy. It signifies little whether the beginning of the action be the beginning of the poem. The beginning of this action is that which happens to Ulysses, when upon his leaving Troy he bends his course for Ithaca. The middle comprehends all the misfortunes he endured, and all the disorders of his own government. The end is the re-instating of the hero in the peaceable possession of his kingdom, where he was acknowledged by his son, his wife, his father, and several others. The poet was sensible he should have ended ill, had he gone no farther than the death of these princes, who were the rivals and enemies of Ulysses, because the reader might have looked for some revenge which the subjects of these princes might have taken, on him who had killed their sovereigns : but this danger over, and the people vanquished and quieted, there was nothing more to be expected. The poem and the action have all their parts, and no more.

But the order of the *Odyssy* differs from that of the *Iliad*, in that the *poem* does not begin with the beginning of the *action*.

* The *causes of the action* are also what the poet is obliged to give an account of. There are three sorts of causes, the humours, the interests, and the designs of men ; and these different causes of an action are likewise often the causes of one another, every man

* Of the causes and beginning of the action.

taking up those interests in which his humour engages him, and forming those designs to which his humour and interest incline him. Of all these the poet ought to inform his readers, and render them conspicuous in his principal personages.

Homer has ingeniously begun his Odyſſey with the transactions at Ithaca, during the absence of Ulyſſes. If he had begun with the travels of his hero, he would scarce have spoken of any one else, and a man might have read a great deal of the poem, without conceiving the least idea of Telemachus, Penelope, or her suitors, who had so great a share in the action; but in the beginning he has pitched upon, besides these personages whom he discovers, he represents Ulyſſes in his full length, and from the very first opening one sees the interest which the Gods take in the action.

The skill and care of the same poet may be seen likewise in inducing his personages in the first book of his Iliad, where he discovers the humours, the interests, and the designs of Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, Ulyſſes, and several others, and even of the Deities. And in his second he makes a review of the Grecian and Trojan armies, which is full evidence, that all we have here said is very necessary.

* As these *causes* are the *beginning* of the action, the opposite designs against that of the hero are the *middle* of it, and form that difficulty or *intrigue*, which makes up the greatest part of the poem; the

* Of the middle or intrigue of the action.

solution or *unravelling* commences when the reader begins to see that difficulty removed, and the doubts cleared up. Homer has divided each of his poems into two parts, and has put a particular intrigue, and the solution of it into each part.

The first part of the Iliad is the anger of Achilles, who is for revenging himself upon Agamemnon by the means of Hector and the Trojans. The *intrigue* comprehends the three days fight which happened in the absence of Achilles: and it consists on one side in the resistance of Agamemnon and the Grecians: and on the other in the revengeful and inexorable humour of Achilles, which would not suffer him to be reconciled. The loss of the Grecians, and the despair of Agamemnon, prepare for a solution by the satisfaction which the incensed hero received from it. The death of Patroclus joined to the offers of Agamemnon, which of itself had proved ineffectual, remove this difficulty, and make the unravelling of the first part.

This death is likewise the beginning of the second part; since it puts Achilles upon the design of revenging himself on Hector. But the design of Hector is opposite to that of Achilles: this Trojan is valiant, and resolved to stand on his own defence. This valour and resolution of Hector, are on his part the cause of the intrigue. All the endeavours Achilles used to meet with Hector, and be the death of him; and the contrary endeavours of the Trojan to keep out of his reach, and defend himself, are the intrigue; which comprehends the battle

of the last day. The unraveling begins at the death of Hector ; and besides that, it contains the insulting of Achilles over his body, the honours he paid to Patroclus, and the intreaties of king Priam. The regrets of this king and the other Trojans, in the sorrowful obsequies they paid to Hector's body, end the unravelling ; they justify the satisfaction of Achilles, and demonstrate his tranquillity.

The first part of the *Odyfsey* is the return of Ulyf-
ses into Ithaca. Neptune opposes it by raising tempests,
and this makes the intrigue. The unravelling is the
arrival of Ulyfses upon his own island, where Nep-
tune could offer him no farther injury. The second
part is the re-instituting this hero in his own govern-
ment. The princes that are his rivals, oppose him,
and this is a fresh intrigue : the solution of it begins
at their deaths, and is compleated as soon as the
Ithacans were appeased.

These two parts in the *Odyfsey* have not one com-
mon intrigue. The anger of Achilles forms both
the intrigues in the *Iliad*, and it is so far the matter
of this *Epopea*, that the very beginning and end of
this poem depend on the beginning and end of this
anger. But let the desire Achilles had to revenge him-
self, and the desire Ulyfses had to return to his own
country be never so near allied, yet we cannot place
them under one and the same notion : for that de-
sire of Ulyfses is not a passion that begins and ends
in the poem with the action : it is a natural habit :
nor does the poet propose it for his subject as he does
the anger of Achilles.

We have already observed what is meant by the *intrigue*, and the *unravelling* thereof; let us now say something of the manner of forming both. These two should arise naturally out of the very essence and subject of the poem, and are to be deduced from thence. Their conduct is so exact and natural, that it seems as if their action had presented them with whatever they inserted, without putting themselves to the trouble of a farther inquiry.

What is more usual and natural to warriors, than anger, heat, passion, and impatience of bearing the least affront or disrespect? This is what forms the intrigue of the *Iliad*: and every thing we read there is nothing else but the effect of this humour and these passions.

What more natural and usual obstacle to those who take voyages, than the sea, the winds, and the storms? Homer makes this the intrigue of the first part of the *Odyssy*: and for the second, he makes use of almost the infallible effect of the long absence of a master, whose return is quite despaired of, viz. the insolence of his servants and neighbours, the danger of his son and wife, and the sequestration of his estate. Besides, an absence of almost twenty years, and the insupportable fatigues joined to the age of which Ulysses then was, might induce him to believe that he should not be owned by those who thought him dead, and whose interest it was to have him really so. Therefore if he had presently declared who he was, and had called himself Ulysses, they would easily have destroyed him as an impostor, before he had an opportunity to make himself known.

There could be nothing more natural nor more necessary than this ingenious disguise, to which the advantages his enemies had taken of his absence had reduced him, and to which his long misfortunes had inured him. This allowed him an opportunity, without hazarding any thing, of taking the best measure, he could, against those persons who could not so much as mistrust any harm from him. This way was afforded him, by the very nature of his actions to execute his designs, and overcome the obstacles it cast before him. And it is this contest between the prudence and the dissimulation of a single man on one hand, and the ungovernable insolence of so many rivals on the other, which constitutes the intrigue of the second part of the *Odysey*.

^t If the *plot* or *intrigue* must be natural, and such as springs from the very subject, as has been already urged; then the *winding-up* of the plot, by a more sure claim, must have this qualification, and be a probable consequence of all that went before. As this is what the readers regard more than the rest, so should the poet be more exact in it. This is the end of the poem, and the last impression that is to be stamped upon them.

We shall find this in the *Odysey*. Ulysses by a tempest is cast upon the island of the Phæacians, to whom he discovers himself, and desires they would favour his return to his own country, which was not very far distant. One cannot see any reason why the king of this island should refuse such a reasonable re-

^t Of the end or unravelling of the action.

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quest, to a hero whom he seemed to have in great esteem. The Phæacians indeed had heard him tell the story of his adventures ; and in this fabulous recital consisted all the advantage that he could derive from his presence ; for the art of war which they admired in him, his undauntedness under dangers, his indefatigable patience, and other virtues, were such as these islanders were not used to. All their talent lay in singing and dancing, and whatsoever was charming in a quiet life. And here we see how dextrously Homer prepares the incidents he makes use of. These people could do no less, for the account with which Ulysses had so much entertained them, than afford him a ship and a safe convoy, which was of little expence or trouble to them.

When he arrived, his long absence, and the travels which had disfigured him, made him altogether unknown ; and the danger he would have incurred, had he discovered himself too soon, forced him to a disguise : lastly, This disguise gave him an opportunity of surprising those young suitors, who for several years together had been accustomed to nothing but to sleep well, and fare daintily.

It was from these examples that Aristotle drew this rule, that “ Whatever concludes the poem, should so “ spring from the very constitution of the fable, as if “ it were a *necessary*, or at least a *probable* consequence.”

S E C T. VI.

THE *time* of the epick action is not fixed, like that of the dramattick poem : it is much longer : for an uninterrupted duration is much more

The time of the action;

necessary in an action which one sees and is present at, than in one which we only read or hear repeated. Besides tragedy is fuller of passion, and consequently of such a violence as cannot admit of so long a duration.

The Iliad containing an action of *anger* and *violence*, the poet allows it but a short time, about *forty days*. The design of the Odyssey required another conduct; the character of the hero is *prudence* and *long-suffering*; therefore the time of its duration is much longer, above *eight years*.

" The *passions* of tragedy are different from those of the epick poem. In the former, *terroure* and *pity* have the chief place; the passion that seems most peculiar to epick poetry, is *admiration*.

Besides this *admiration*, which in general distinguishes the epick poem from the dramatick; each epick poem has likewise some peculiar *passion*, which distinguishes it in particular from other epick poems, and constitutes a kind of singular and individual difference between these poems of the same species. These singular passions correspond to the *character* of the *hero*. *Anger* and *terroure* reign throughout the Iliad, because Achilles is angry, and the most terrible of all men. The Æneid has all the *soft* and *tender passions*, because that is the character of Æneas. The prudence, wisdom, and constancy of Ulysses do not allow him either of these extremes, therefore the poet does not permit one of them to be predominant in the Odyssey. He confines himself to *admiration*

" The passions of the epick poem.

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only, which he carries to an higher pitch than in the Iliad : and it is upon this account that he introduces a great many more machines, in the Odyſſey, into the body of the action, than are to be ſeen in the actions of the other two poems.

* The *manners* of the epick poem ought to be *poetically good*, but it is not neceſſary they be always morally ſo. They are poetically good, when one may diſcover the virtue or vice, the good or ill inclinations of every one who ſpeaks or acts : they are poetically bad, when perſons are made to ſpeak or act out of character, or inconſiſtently or unequally. The manners of Æneas and of Mezentius are equally good, conſidered poetically, becauſe they equally demonſtrate the piety of the one, and the impiety of the other.

† It is requiſite to make the ſame diſtinction between a hero in morality and a hero in poetry, as between moral and poetical goodneſs. Achilles had as much right to the latter as Æneas. Ariſtotle ſays, that the hero of a poem ſhould be neither good nor bad ; neither advanced above the reſt of mankind by his virtues, or ſunk beneath them by his vices ; that he may be the proper and fuller example to others, both what to imitate and what to decline.

The other qualifications of the *manners* are, that they be *ſuitable* to the cauſes which either raiſe or diſcover them in the perſons ; that they have an exact *reſemblance* to what hiſtory, or fable, have delivered of thoſe perſons, to whom they are aſcribed ;

* The manners.

† Character of the hero.

and that there be an *equality* in them, so that no man is made to act, or speak, out of his character.

² But this equality is not sufficient for the *unity of the character*; it is further necessary, that the same spirit appear in all sort of encounters. Thus *Æneas* acting with great *piety* and *mildness* in the first part of the *Æneid*, which requires no other character; and afterwards appearing illustrious in heroick valour, in the wars of the second part; but there, without any appearance either of a hard or a soft disposition; would, doubtless, be far from offending against the *equality* of the manners: but yet there would be no *simplicity* or *unity* in the character. So that, besides the qualities that claim their particular place upon different occasions, there must be one appearing throughout, which commands over all the rest; and without this, we may affirm, it is no character.

One may indeed make a hero as valiant as *Achilles*, as pious as *Æneas*, and as prudent as *Ulysses*. But it is a mere chimera to imagine a hero that has the valour of *Achilles*, the piety of *Æneas*, and the prudence of *Ulysses*, at one and the same time. This vision might happen to an author, who would suit the character of a hero to whatever each part of the action might naturally require, without regarding the essence of the fable, or the unity of the character in the same person upon all sorts of occasions: this hero would be the mildest, best-natured prince in the world, and also the most cholerick, hard-hearted and implacable creature imaginable; he would be extremely tender like *Æneas*, extremely violent like

² Unity of the character.

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Achilles, and yet have the indifference of Ulysses, that is incapable of the two extremes. Would it not be in vain for the poet to call this person by the same name throughout?

Let us reflect on the effects it would produce in several poems, whose authors were of opinion, that the chief character of a hero is that of an accomplished man. They would be all alike; all valiant in battle, prudent in council, pious in the acts of religion, courteous, civil, magnificent; and lastly, endued with all the prodigious virtues any poet could invent. All this would be independent of the action and the subject of the poem; and upon seeing each hero separated from the rest of the work, we should not easily guess, to what action, and to what poem, the hero belonged. So that we should see, that none of those would have a character; since the character is that, which makes a person discernible, and which distinguishes him from all others.

This commanding quality in Achilles, is his anger; in Ulysses, the art of dissimulation; in Æneas meekness. Each of these may be stiled, by way of eminence, the character in these heroes.

But these characters cannot be alone. It is absolutely necessary that some other should give them a lustre, and embellish them as far as they are capable: either by hiding the defects that are in each, by some noble and shining qualities; as the poet has done the anger of Achilles, by shading it with extraordinary valour: or by making them entirely of the nature of a true and solid virtue, as is to be observed in the two others. The dissimulation of Ulysses is a part

of his prudence; and the meekness of Æneas is wholly employed in submitting his will to the Gods. For the making up this union, our poets have joined together such qualities as are by nature the most compatible; *valour with anger, meekness with piety, and prudence with dissimulation.* This last union was necessary for the *goodness* of Ulysses; for without that, his dissimulation might have degenerated into wickedness and double-dealing.

S E C T. VII.

WE come now to the *machines* of the epick poem. The chief passion which it aims to excite being *admiration*, nothing is so conducive to that as the *marvellous*; and the importance and dignity of the action is by nothing so greatly elevated as by the *care and interposition of Heaven.*

The machines are of three sorts. Some are *Theological*, and were invented to explain the nature of the Gods. Others are *physical*, and represent the things of nature. The last are *moral*, and are the images of virtues and vices.

Homer and the antients have given to their Deities the manners, passions, and vices of men. Their poems are wholly allegorical; and in this view it is easier to defend Homer, than to blame him. We cannot accuse him for making mention of many Gods, for his bestowing passions upon them, or even introducing them fighting against men. The scripture uses the like figures and expressions.

^a Of the machinery.

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If it be allowable to speak thus of the Gods in *theology*, much more in the fictions of *natural philosophy*, where, if a poet describes the Deities, he must give them such manners, speeches, and actions, as are conformable to the nature of the things they represent under those divinities. The case is the same in the *morals* of the Deities: Minerva is wise because she represents prudence; Venus is both good or bad, because the passion of love is capable of these contrary qualities.

Since among the Gods of a poem some are good, some bad, and some indifferently either; and since of our passions we make so many allegorical Deities; we may attribute to the *Gods* all that is done in the poem, whether good or evil. But these Deities do not act constantly in one and the same manner.

Sometimes they act invisibly, and by mere inspiration; which has nothing in it extraordinary or miraculous: being no more than what we say every day, "That some God has assisted us, or some demon has instigated us."

At other times they appear visibly, and manifest themselves to men, in a manner altogether miraculous and præternatural.

The third way has something of both the others; it is in truth a miracle, but is not commonly so accounted: this includes dreams, oracles, &c.

All these ways must be *probable*; for however necessary the marvellous is to the epic action, as nothing is so conducive to admiration; yet we can, on the other hand, admire nothing, that we think impossible. Though the probability of these machines

be of a very large extent, (since it is founded upon Divine Power) it is not without limitations. There are numerous instances of allowable and probable machines in the epick poem, where the Gods are no less actors than the men. But the less credible sort, such as *metamorphoses*, &c. are far more rare.

This suggests a reflection on the method rendering those machines probable, which in their own nature are hardly so. Those, which require only *Divine probability*, should be so disengaged from the action, that one might subtract them from it, without destroying the action. But those, which are essential and necessary, should be grounded upon *human probability*, and not on the sole power of God. Thus the episodes of Circe, the Syrens, Polyphemus, &c. are necessary to the action of the Odyssey, and yet not humanly probable: yet Homer has artificially reduced them to human probability, by the simplicity and ignorance of the Phæacians, before whom he causes those recitals to be made.

The next question is, Where, and on what occasions machines may be used? It is certain Homer and Virgil make use of them every where, and scarce suffer any action to be performed without them. Petronius makes this a precept: *Per ambages, deorumque ministeria*, &c. The Gods are mentioned in the very *proposition* of their works, the *invocation* is address'd to them, and the whole *narration* is full of them. The Gods are the *causes* of the action, they form the *intrigue*, and bring about the *solution*. The precept of Aristotle and Horace, that the unravelling of the plot should not proceed from a miracle, or the ap-

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pearance of a God, has place only in dramatick poetry, not in the epick. For it is plain, that both in the solution of the Iliad and Odyfsey, the Gods are concerned: in the former, the Deities meet to appease the anger of Achilles: Iris and Mercury are sent to that purpose, and Minerva eminently assists Achilles in the decisive combat with Hector. In the Odyfsey, the same Goddess fights close by Ulyfles against the suitors, and concludes that peace betwixt him and the Ithacensians, which compleats the poem.

We may therefore determine, that a machine is not an invention to extricate the poet out of any difficulty which embarrasses him: but that the presence of a Divinity, and some action surprizing and extraordinary, are inserted into almost all the parts of his work, in order to render it more majestick and more admirable. But this mixture ought to be so made, that the machines might be retrenched, without taking any thing from the action: at the same time that it gives the readers a lesson of piety and virtue; and teaches them, that the most brave and the most wise can do nothing, and attain nothing great and glorious, without the assistance of Heaven. Thus the machinery crowns the whole work, and renders it at once, *marvellous, probable, and moral.*

THE
FIRST BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

VOL. I.

B

T H E
A R G U M E N T.

Minerva's Descent to Ithaca.

T H E Poem opens within forty-eight days of the arrival of Ulysses in his dominions. He had now remained seven years in the island of Calypso, when the Gods assembled in council proposed the method of his departure from thence, and his return to his native country. For this purpose it is concluded to send Mercury to Calypso, and Pallas immediately descends to Ithaca. She holds a conference with Telemachus, in the shape of Mentis king of the Taphians; in which she advises him to take a journey in quest of his father Ulysses, to Pylos and Sparta, where Nestor and Menelaus yet reigned; then, after having wisely displayed her divinity, disappears. The suitors of Penelope make great entertainments, and riot in her palace till night. Phemius sings to them the return of the Grecians, till Penelope puts a stop to the song. Some words arise between the suitors and Telemachus, who summons the council to meet the day following.

THE
FIRST BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE man, for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Long exercis'd in woes, oh Muse! resound.
Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
Of sacred Troy, and raz'd her heav'n-built wall.

NOTES.

WE shall proceed in the same method through the course of these annotations upon the *Odyssey*, as those in the *Iliad*; considering Homer chiefly as a poet, endeavouring to make his beauties understood, and not to praise without a reason given. It is equally an extreme, on the one hand to think Homer has no human defects; and on the other to dwell so much upon those defects, as to depreciate his beauties. The greater part of criticks form a general character, from the observation of particular errors, taken in their own oblique or imperfect views; which is as unjust, as to make a judgment of the beauty of a man's body from the shadow it happens to cast, in such or such a position. To convince the reader of this intended impartiality, we readily allow the *Odyssey* to be inferior to the *Iliad* in many respects. It has not that sublimity of spirit, or that enthusiasm of poetry; but then it must be allowed, if it be less noble, it is more instructive; the other abounds with

4 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Wand'ring from clime to clime, observant stray'd,
Their manners noted, and their states survey'd. 6

more heroism, this with more morality. The Iliad gives us a draught of Gods and heroes, of discord, of contentions, and scenes of slaughter; the Odyssey sets before us a scene more amiable, the landscapes of nature; the pleasures of private life, the duties of every station, the hospitality of antient times; a less busy, but more agreeable portrait. The Iliad concludes with the ruin, the Odyssey with the happiness of a nation. Horace was of the same opinion, as is evident from the epistle to Lollius.

“Seditione, dolis, scelere, atque libidine, & ira,
“Iliacos intra muros peccatur & extra.
“Rurfus, quid virtus & quid sapientia possit,
“Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulyssæm.”

v. 1. *The man for wisdom, &c.*] Homer opens this poem with the utmost simplicity and modesty; he continually grows upon the reader,

“Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem
“Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.”

Cicero lays this down as a rule for the orator, *Principia verecunda, non elatis intensa verbis*; and Horace for the poet, *Nec sic incipies, &c.* He proposes the beginning of the Odyssey as a pattern for all future poems, and has translated them in his Art of Poetry.

“Dic mihi Musa, virum captæ post tempora Trojæ,
“Qui mores hominum multorum vidit, & urbes.”

May I be forgiven the arrogance, if I should offer a criticism upon this translation: the *sufferings* of Ulysses are the subject of the whole Odyssey, and yet Horace has omitted the mention of those sufferings: ὅς μάλ'α πολλὰ

On stormy seas unnumber'd toils he bore,
Safe with his friends to gain his natal shore:

πλάγχθη. There is another word also which seems essential, that is, πολύτροπον, this is likewise omitted. For the sufferings of Ulysses, and the wisdom by which he extricated himself from them, enter into the very design of the poem. But indeed in another place he has plainly had regard to all these circumstances.

“ Qui domitor Trojæ, multorum providus urbes
“ Et mores hominum inspexit, latumque per æquor
“ Dum sibi, dum sociis, reditum parat, aspera multa
“ Pertulit.”—— *Epist. ad Loll.*

I must also refute a criticism of Rapin, who will have it that the word πολύτροπος includes a character of craft and low cunning, unworthy of a brave spirit. But Eustathius admirably vindicates the poet in this respect; he shews us that τρόπος no where in Homer signifies (ἦθη) or morals; and that it implies a man who could accommodate himself to every condition of life; one who in the worst estate had still a reserve to free himself from it; it therefore, says he, signifies a man that through experience has learned wisdom. I have likewise the authority of Horace for this sense, in the above-cited passage,

“ Qui domitor Trojæ, multorum providus urbes.”

I take *providus* in this place to signify not only a man who noted the manners of various nations with care, but also one who in calamity could foresee methods to extricate himself from it. And surely nothing can be more unjust than what Rapin objects against Ulysses, in employing his wisdom only in his own preservation, while all his companions were lost: Homer himself sufficiently refutes this objection, and directly tells us, that he employed his

Vain toils ! their impious folly dar'd to prey
On herds devoted to the God of day ;

10

wisdom in the care of their safety, but that they through their folly defeated his wisdom. The words of Homer, says Eustathius, shew that a wise man neglects not his friends in adversity. But, says Rapin, what could oblige Homer to begin with so dishonourable an action, and place the greatest weakness of his hero in the very frontispiece of his poem ; and invoke his muse to sing the man who with difficulty saved himself, and suffered his companions to be destroyed ? There had been some weight in this objection, if Ulysses had saved his own, with the loss of their lives ; but I cannot see any dishonour in his preserving himself by wisdom, when they destroyed themselves by folly : it was chiefly by storms that they perished ; it can be no imputation to his character, not to be able to restrain the effects of a tempest ; he did all that a wise man could do ; he gave them such admonitions upon every emergency, that if they had pursued them, they had been preserved as well as Ulysses.

v. 1. For *wisdom's various arts renown'd,*] Bossu's observations in relation to this epithet πολύτροπος, given to Ulysses, is worth transcribing. The fable of the Odyssey (says he) is wholly for the conduct and policy of a state : therefore the quality it requires is *wisdom* ; but this virtue is of too large an extent for the simplicity which a just and precise *character* requires ; it is therefore requisite it should be limited. The great art of kings is the mystery of *disimulation*. It is well known, that Lewis the Eleventh, for the instruction of his son, reduced all the Latin language to these words only, viz. *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*. It was likewise by this practice that Saul began his reign, when he was first elected, and as yet full of the Spirit of God. The first thing we read of him in holy writ is, * that

* Ille vero dissimulabat se audire.

Reg. lib. i.

The God vindictive doom'd them never more
(Ah men unblest'd!) to touch that natal shore.

he made as if he did not hear the words which seditious people spoke against him.

This then is the *character* which the Greek poet gives his Ulysses in the proposition of his poem, he calls him *ἄνδρα πολύτροπον*; to denote this prudent dissimulation, which disguised him so many ways, and put him upon taking so many shapes.

Without any thing having been mentioned of Circe, who detained him with her a whole year, and who was famous for the transformation she made of all sorts of persons; the reader finds him at first with Calypso the daughter of wife Atlas, who bore up the vast pillars that reached from earth to heaven, and whose knowledge penetrated into the depths of the unfathomable ocean: that is to say, who was ignorant of nothing in heaven, earth, or sea. And as the first product and principal part of so high, so solid, and so profound a knowledge, was to know how to conceal one's self; this wise man called his daughter by a name that signified a * *secret*. The poet makes his hero, whom he designed for a politician, to stay seven whole years with this nymph. She taught him so well, that afterwards he lost no opportunity of putting her lessons in practice: for he does nothing without a disguise. At his parting from Ogygia he is cast upon the Isle of Phæacia: as kind as his reception was, yet he stays till the night before he went off, e'er he would discover himself. From thence he goes to Ithaca: the first adventure that happened to him there was with Minerva, the most prudent among the deities, as Ulysses was the most prudent among men. She says so expressly in that very passage. Nor did they fail to disguise

* *Καλύπτειν.*

Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate,
Celestial muse ! and to our world relate.

themselves. Minerva takes upon her the shape of a shepherd, and Ulysses tells her he was obliged to fly from Crete, because he had murdered the son of king Idomeneus. The Goddess discovers herself first, and commends him particularly, because these artifices were so easy and natural to him, that they seemed to be born with him. Afterwards the hero under the form of a beggar deceives first of all Eumeus, then his son, and last of all his wife and every body else, till he found an opportunity of punishing his enemies, to whom he discovered not himself till he killed them, namely on the last night. After his discovering himself in the palace, he goes the next day to deceive his father, appearing at first under a borrowed name; before he would give him joy of his return. Thus he takes upon him all manner of shapes, and dissembles to the very last. But the poet joins to this character a valour and a constancy which render him invincible in the most daring and desperate adventures,

v. 3. *Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
Of sacred Troy——]*

Whence is it that Ulysses is said to have overthrown Troy, and not Achilles, who was of more remarkable courage than Ulysses? Eustathius tells us, that the destruction of Troy ought to be ascribed chiefly to Ulysses, as he not only took away the *Palladium*, but was the inventor of the stratagem of the wooden horse, by which that city was conquered. Virgil in his second book of the *Æneis* gives us a noble description of its destruction, by which we find that Ulysses was not only the contriver of its ruin, but bore a great share in the actions of the night in which that city was overturned.

Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd;
All who the wars of ten long years surviv'd, 16

v. 9. *Vain toils! their impious folly, &c.*] By this single trait, Homer marks an essential difference between the Iliad and the Odyssey; namely, that in the former poem the people perished by the folly of their kings:

“ Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.”

In this, the people perish by their own folly, while their prince omits nothing to procure their felicity. A plain reason why the Odyssey is more calculated for the people, than the Iliad. *Dacier.*

v. 13. *Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate.*] It may be asked why the poet invokes the muse to recount only part of the sufferings of Ulysses? and why those words, *To Us also*, are inserted? To the first it may be answered, that an heroic poem dwells chiefly upon incidents of importance, and passes over every thing that does not contribute to raise our idea of the hero, or the main design of the poem. To the other Eustathius answers several ways: either, says he the word *εἰ* is to be taken as an expletive, as it is in a thousand places in Homer; or it means that this is a subject so considerable, that it will be a theme to many poets: or that being a true history, it had spread over many nations of the world, and that Homer himself received the story of the poem from Ægypt; and then the meaning will be, “ Sing, oh muse, to the Greeks as well as to other nations, the sufferings of Ulysses.” I should prefer the first as being the most natural: the rest seem forced, and consequently improper for the opening of a poem, where the utmost plainness is necessary, especially, if we consider that Ulysses was a Grecian, and it is not probable that the Grecians should be the least ac-

And 'scap'd the perils of the gulfy main.
 Ulysses, sole of all the victor train,
 An exile from his dear paternal coast,
 Deplor'd his absent queen, and empire lost. 20

quainted with the story, or the latest to celebrate the actions of a Grecian.

v. 15. *Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd.*] It is necessary for the better understanding of the poem, to fix the period of time from which it takes its beginning: Homer, as Eustathius observes, does not begin with the wanderings of Ulysses; he steps at once into the latter end of his actions, and leaves the preceding story to be told by way of narration. Thus in his Iliad, he dates his poem from the anger of Achilles, which happened almost at the conclusion of the Trojan war. From hence Horace drew his observation in his Arte Poet.

“Semper ad eventum festinat; & in medias res
 “Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit.”

There are but forty-eight days from the departure of Ulysses from Calypso, to his discovery in Ithaca; he had been one year with Circe, and seven with Calypso, when the Gods dispatched Mercury to that Goddess; from which point of time we are to date the Odyssey.

This observation gives a reason why the poet invokes the muse to recount the wanderings of this hero in part only; for Ulysses, as appears from the beginning of the ninth book, after he left the shores of Troy, was driven to Ismarus of the Ciconians. An historian must have begun from the fall of Troy, and related his wanderings with truth and order; for history is chiefly for instruction: but a poet takes another method, and disposes every circumstance arbitrarily; he chuses or rejects, as suits best

Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay,
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay :
 In vain—for now the circling years disclose
 The day destin'd to reward his woes.
 At length his Ithaca is giv'n by fate, 25
 Where yet new labours his arrival wait ;
 At length their rage the hostile pow'rs restrain,
 All but the ruthless monarch of the main.
 But now the God, remote, a heav'nly guest,
 In Æthiopia grac'd the genial feast, 30

with his principal design, and in such a manner as to give at once delight and instruction.

v. 21. *Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay.*] To the remark before cited of Bossu upon the abode of Ulysses with Calypso, may be added this of the Abbé Fraguier : that his residing seven years in the caves of Calypso (the Goddess of secrecy) may only mean that he remained so long hid from the knowledge and enquiry of all men ; or that whatever befel him in all that time, was lost to history, or made no part in the poem.

v. 28. *All but the ruthless monarch of the main.*] It may be asked why Neptune is thus enraged against Ulysses? Homer himself tells us, because that hero had put out the eye of his son Cyclops. But if we take Neptune by way of allegory for the ocean, the passage implies, that the sufferings of Ulysses were chiefly by sea ; and therefore poetry, which adds a grandeur to the meanest circumstance, introduces the God of it as his greatest enemy. *Eustathius.*

v. 30. *In Æthiopia, &c.*] Strabo in his first book delivers his opinion, that “ the ancient Grecians included all “ those people who lived upon the southern ocean, from “ east to west, in the general name of Æthiopians, and

(A race divided, whom with sloping rays
 The rising and descending sun surveys)
 There on the world's extreamest verge, rever'd
 With hecatombs and pray'r in pomp preferr'd,
 Distant he lay: while in the bright abodes 35
 Of high Olympus, Jove conven'd the Gods:
 Th' assembly thus the Sire supreme address'd,
 Ægyptus' fate revolving in his breast,
 Whom young Orestes to the dreary coast
 Of Pluto sent, a blood-polluted ghost. 40

" that it was not confined to those only who lay south of
 " Ægypt." Ptolemy says, " that under the Zodiac,
 " from east to west, inhabit the Æthiopians, black of co-
 " lour." And elsewhere the same geographer divides
 Æthiopia into the eastern and the western. These eastern
 and western Æthiopians were separated by the Arabian or
 Ægyptian gulf; which though never mentioned by Ho-
 mer, as Aristarchus remarked, yet it is not probable (says
 Strabo) that he should be ignorant of it, it being but a
 thousand stadia distant from the Mediterranean, when he
 knew the Ægyptian Thebes, which was four times as far
 off. *Strab. Plin. Spondan.*

I will not repeat what was observed upon the Gods be-
 ing gone to the Æthiopians, in the first book of the Iliad;
 it is sufficient in general to observe, that the Æthiopians
 were a people very religious towards the Gods, and that
 they held a pompous feast twelve days annually to their
 honour; and in particular, that the poet very judiciously
 makes use of this solemnity to remove Neptune out of the
 way, who was the enemy of Ulysses, that he may with the
 greater security bring off his hero from Calypso's Island.
Eustathius.

Perverſe mankind ! whoſe wills, created free,
 Charge all their woes on abſolute decree ;
 All to the dooming Gods their guilt tranſlate,
 And follies are miſcall'd the crimes of fate.
 When to his luſt Ægyſthus gave the rein, 45
 Did fate, or we, th' adult'rous act conſtrain ?

v. 41. *Jupiter's ſpeech.*] The ſolemnity and ſententiouſneſs of this ſpeech is taken notice of by Eufſtathius ; and ſurely poetry muſt be highly valuable, when it delivers ſuch excellent inſtructions. It contained the whole of religion among the ancients ; and made philoſophy more agreeable. This paſſage is an inſtance of it, a paſſage worthy of a Chriſtian ; it ſhews us that the Supreme Being is ſovereignly good ; that he rewards the juſt, and puniſhes the unjuſt ; and that the folly of man, and not the decree of heaven, is the cauſe of human calamity.

v. 45. *Ægyſthus.*] It is difficult to find a reaſon why, in the original, Jupiter ſhould give ſuch an honourable appellation to Ægyſthus, as ἀνύμων, *unblameable*, who had diſhonoured the bed of Agamemnon, and taken his life away ; eſpecially in that very inſtant when he condemns the fact with ſo great ſolemnity : Eufſtathius ſays, that Homer, an enemy to cenſure and invective, introduces that God as having reſpect only to his good qualities, and commending him for his general character ; and adds that it had been an indecency in the poet to have given countenance to that baſe cuſtom by the authority of Jupiter. Dacier is not ſatisfied with this reaſon, and tells us that Homer gives Ægyſthus this title, to vindicate Jupiter from the imputation of his crimes : he gives us to underſtand that heaven is not the cauſe of man's failings ; that he is by creation able to act virtuoſly, and that it is through his own miſconduct that he deviates into evil ; and therefore the meaning is this ; “ Jupiter calling to

Did fate, or we, when great Atrides dy'd,
Urge the bold traitor to the regicide ?

“ mind Ægythus, that Ægythus whom he had created
“ wise and virtuous, and made capable to sustain that
“ character.” And this agrees admirably with the beginning of the speech of Jupiter, who there vindicates his own divinity.

But if this should seem too refined, it may be sufficient to take the word in that good sense which Ægythus might have deserved for many good qualities : thus Achilles is called the *swift of foot*, even when he stands, or sleeps ; the first being his general character. It may be further confirmed by a passage something resembling it in the holy Scriptures : the Ægyptian midwives were guilty of a lye to Pharoah, and yet God pardons it, and blesses them ; he blesses them not because they lyed, but because they preserved the children of the Israelites.

v. 49. *Hermes I sent, &c.*] It would be endless to observe every moral passage in the Odyssey, the whole of it being but one lesson of morality. But surely it must be a pleasure to the reader to learn what notions the ancients had of a Deity, from the oldest book extant, except the book of Moses.

Jupiter here declares that he never fails to warn mankind from evil, and that he had sent Mercury for this purpose to Ægythus. It may be asked, what is this Mercury whom Jupiter sends ? It is the light of nature, which heaven implants in the breast of every man ; and which, as Cicero says, is not only more ancient than the world, but co-eval with the Master of the world himself. He writes to this effect : *There was from the beginning such a thing as reason, a direct emanation of nature itself, which prompted to good, and averted from evil. A reason which did not then become a law, when it was first reduced to writing, but was so even from the moment it existed, and it*

Hermes I sent, while yet his soul remain'd
Sincere from royal blood, and faith profan'd ; 50
To warn the wretch, that young Orestes, grown
To manly years, should re-assert the throne.
Yet impotent of mind, and uncontroll'd,
He plung'd into the gulf which heav'n foretold.

Here paus'd the God ; and pensive thus replies
Minerva, graceful with her azure eyes. 56
O thou ! from whom the whole creation springs,
The source of pow'r on earth deriv'd to kings !

existed from ever, of an equal date with the divine intelligence : it is the true and primordial law, proper to command and to forbid, it is the reason of the great Jupiter.

The reason of the supreme Being, is here called Mercury ; that reason flowing from God, which is constantly dictating to the most corrupted hearts, *this is good, or this is evil*. Hence arose an ancient proverb, recorded by Simplicius, *Reason is a Mercury to all men*. Epictetus [lib. iii. Arrian.] says, *Apollo knew that Laius would not obey his oracle. Apollo nevertheless did not neglect to prophesy to Laius those evils that threatened him. The goodness of the Divinity never fails to advertise mankind ; that source of truth is ever open and free : but men are ever incredulous, disobedient, and rebellious*. Dacier.

v. 57. *Minerva's speech.*] It may be asked what relation Ulysses has to Ægythus, that the mention of the one should immediately give occasion for the remembrance of the other ? And it may appear unnatural in the poet to give rise to his poem by so unexpected a transition from Ægythus to Ulysses. Eustathius vindicates Homer, by shewing that it is not only beautiful but natural, to take rise from what offers itself to our immediate observation. What can be more natural, when Jupiter is relating how

His death was equal to the direful deed ;
 So may the man of blood be doom'd to bleed ! 60
 But grief and rage alternate wound my breast
 For brave Ulysses, still by fate oppress.
 Amidst an isle, around whose rocky shore
 The forests murmur, and the surges roar,
 The blameless hero from his wish'd for home 65
 A Goddess guards in her enchanted dome.
 (Atlas her fire, to whose far-piercing eye
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie ;

he punishes the wicked, than for Wisdom or Minerva to suggest, that the good ought to be rewarded ? There is no forced introduction, no artful preparation ; but the whole arises from the occasion, which is a great beauty.
Eustathius.

v. 63. *Amidst an isle, &c.]* There was, according to true history, such an island of Calypso, of which Strabo writes ; that Solon gives an account of the island Atlantis bordering upon Ægypt, and that he went thither to make inquiry, and learned that an island was once there, but by time was vanished. *Eustathius.*

v. 67. *Atlas her fire, to whose far-piercing eye
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie ;
 Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears
 End in the starry vault, and prop the spheres.]*

Atlas is here said to understand all the depths of the sea : but the epithet ὀλοόφρων applied to him, has two different significations. It implies either, *one whose thoughts are full of terrible and dismal things*, or *one who has infinite and unbounded views*, and it is doubtful which of them Homer means. To reconcile both, may we not think our author had heard something of the ancient tradition which makes Atlas the same person with Enoch, and represents him as a great astronomer, who prophesied of the

Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears
End in the starry vault; and prop the spheres.) 70

universal deluge, and exhorted mankind to repentance? Therefore he named his son Methuselah, to shew that after his death the waters should overspread the face of the earth. His continual lamentations on this occasion caused him to be called the *Weeper*; for the world is always an enemy to melancholy predictions. Thus Homer upon the credit of this tradition might very well call Atlas, *one whose thoughts ran upon dismal things, or one whose views and cares were vastly extended.*

I insist no otherwise upon this, but as a conjecture; yet it is further strengthened by what follows in the next lines: *That Atlas sustains those columns, which being fixed upon the earth support the heavens.* This is generally interpreted of his great skill in astronomy and geography. But may not the reason be more particular? Since Atlas or Enoch had prophesied of the deluge, and since that prediction was looked upon as the effect of his skill in astronomy; might it not be said he knew the abysses of the sea, and sustained the pillars of heaven, to express that he knew how the fountains of the deep, and the waters above the heavens, should unite to drown the earth?

As to the image of the *pillars of heaven*, it is frequent in the sacred books, and used to express the height of vast mountains. (Pindar calls *Ætna* the *ἐξάντων κίονα*;) and there might probably be something more particular that furnished Homer with this idea; I mean the pillars of Hercules, well known in his time, and neighbouring to the mountain he describes. *Dacier.*

See the description of this mountain in the fourth book of Virgil, where the same image is preserved without any hint of allegory: as indeed it is no more than a poetical manner of expressing the *great height and extensive prospect* of the mountain.

By his fair daughter is the chief confin'd,
 Who soothes to dear delight his anxious mind :
 Successless all her soft caresses prove,
 To banish from his breast his country's love ;
 To seek the smoke from his lov'd palace rise, 75 }
 While the dear isle in distant prospects lies, }
 With what contentment could he close his eyes ? }
 And will Omnipotence neglect to save
 The suffering virtue of the wife and brave ?

v. 75. *To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise.*] There is an agreeable tenderness in this image, and nothing can better paint the ardent desire a man naturally has to review his native country after a long absence. This is still stronger than that which Cicero extols in several places of his works, that Ulysses preferred the sight of Ithaca to the immortality proffered him by Calypso. He here desires to purchase, at the price of his life, the pleasure, not of returning to his country, but even of seeing at a distance the very smoke of it. *Dacier.*

There are some things dispersed in this speech of Pallas, which I shall lay together ; as that Minerva makes it an aggravation to the calamity of Ulysses, to be detained by a Goddess that loves him ; that he is inclosed in an island ; and she adds, round which the seas flow ; as if that was not common to all islands ; but these expressions are used to shew the impossibility of the escape of Ulysses, without the interposition of Jupiter.

In the conclusion she observes, that Ulysses never neglected to sacrifice before Troy : this is said to shew the great piety of Ulysses, who not only paid his sacrifices in Ithaca, where he abounded in riches, but amongst strangers in an enemy's country, where there might be a scarcity of offerings. *Eustathius.*

Book I. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 19

Must he, whose altars on the Phrygian shore 80
With frequent rites, and pure, avow'd thy pow'r,
Be doom'd the worst of human ills to prove,
Unblest'd, abandon'd to the wrath of Jove?

Daughter! what words have pass thy lips un-
weigh'd?

(Reply'd the thund'rer to the martial maid) 85

Deem not unjustly by my doom oppress'd
Of human race the wisest and the best.

Neptune, by pray'r repentant rarely won,
Afflicts the chief, t' avenge his giant-son,
Whose visual orb Ulysses robb'd of light; 90

Great Polypheme, of more than mortal might!
Him young Thoösa bore (the bright increase
Of Phorcys, dreaded in the founts and seas:)

v. 84. *Daughter! what words, &c.*] This verse is frequently repeated both in the Iliad and the Odyssey; it has here a particular energy. Jupiter reproves Minerva for supposing he could ever be unmindful of an hero so pious as Ulysses. It is spoken with vehemence; an instance, says Eustathius, that it is not only equitable, but an attribute of divinity, for rulers to remember those who serve them faithfully.

v. 89. *T' avenge his giant-son.*] It is artful in the poet to tell the reader the occasion of the sufferings of Ulysses in the opening of the poem; it is a justice due to his character, to shew that his misfortunes are not the consequence of his crimes, but the effect of Neptune's anger.

It is observable, that Homer does not stop to explain how Ulysses put out the eye of the Cyclops: he hastens forward into the middle of his poem, and leaves that for the future narration of Ulysses.

Whom Neptune ey'd with bloom of beauty blest,
 And in his cave the yielding nymph comprest. 95
 For this, the God constrains the Greek to roam,
 A hopeless exile from his native home,
 From death alone exempt—but cease to mourn;
 Let all combine t' atchieve his wish'd return:
 Neptune aton'd, his wrath shall now refrain, 100
 Or thwart the synod of the Gods in vain.

Father and king ador'd! Minerva cry'd,
 Since all who in th' Olympian bow'r reside
 Now make the wand'ring Greek their publick care,
 Let Hermes to th' * Atlantick isle repair; 105
 Bid him, arriv'd in bright Calypso's court,
 The sanction of th' assembled pow'rs report:
 That wise Ulysses to his native land
 Must speed, obedient to their high command.
 Meantime Telemachus, the blooming heir 110
 Of sea-girt Ithaca, demands my care:

* Ogygia.

v. 110. *Meantime Telemachus — demands my care, &c.*] Rapin has raised several objections against this piece of conduct in Homer: he tells us that the action of the Odyssey is imperfect; that it begins with the voyages of Telemachus, and ends with those of Ulysses: that the four first books are all concerning Telemachus: that his voyage bears no proportion to that of Ulysses: that it contributes nothing to his return, which is brought about by Jupiter, and the assistance of the Phæacians: that this gave occasion to Beni in his *Academical Discourses* to assert, that the fable of the Odyssey is double: that the four

'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years,
In sage debates ; furrounded with his peers,

first books of it are neither episode, nor part of an action, nor have any connection with the rest of the work.

I am of opinion, that these objections are made with too great severity ; the destruction of the suitors is the chief hinge upon which the poem turns, as it contributes chiefly to the re-establishment of Ulysses in his country and regality ; and whatever contributes to this end, contributes to the principal action, and is of a piece with the rest of the poem ; and that this voyage does so is evident, in that it gives a defeat to the suitors, and controls their insolence ; it preserves Ulysses's throne and bed inviolate, in that it gives Telemachus courage to resist their attempts it sets his character in a fair point of light, who is the second personage of the poem, and is to have a great share in the future actions of it.

Eustathius judiciously observes, that Homer here prepares the way for the defeat of the suitors, the chief design of his poem ; and lays the ground-work of probability on which he intends to build his poem, and reconcile it to the rules of credibility.

If it be asked for what end this voyage of Telemachus is made ; the answer is, to inquire after Ulysses : so that whatever episodes are interwoven, Ulysses is still in view ; and whatever Telemachus acts, is undertaken solely upon his account ; and consequently, whatever is acted, contributes to the principal design, the restoration of Ulysses. So that the fable is intire, and the action not double.

It is to be remembered also, that the sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the poem ; his personal calamities are not only intended, but his domestick misfortunes ; and by this conduct Homer shews us the extent of his misfortunes : his queen is attempted, his throne threatened,

To save the state ; and timely to restrain
 The bold intrusion of the sailor-train ; 115
 Who croud his palace, and with lawless pow'r
 His herds and flocks in feastful rites devour.
 To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste
 Of sandy Pyle, the royal youth shall haste.

and his wealth consumed in riot ; Ulysses suffers in Tele-
 machus, and in every circumstance of life is unhappy.

v. 112. *'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years, &c.]*
 In this the poet draws the out-lines of what he is to fill
 up in the four subsequent books : and nothing can give
 us a greater idea of his unbounded invention, than his
 building upon so plain a foundation such a noble super-
 structure : he entertains us with variety of episodes, his-
 torical relations, and manners of those ancient times : it
 must be confessed, that the characters in the *Odyssy*, and
 the number of the chief actors, are but few ; and yet the
 poet never tires : he varies and diversifies the story so
 happily, that he is continually opening new scenes to
 engage our attention. He resembles his own Proteus, he
 is capable of all shapes, yet in all shapes the same Deity.

v. 118. *To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste
 Of sandy Pyle —]*

Rapin is very severe upon this conduct. When Tele-
 machus, says he, is to search for his father in the courts
 of Greece, he cannot make the least progress without Mi-
 nerva ; it is she who inspires his thoughts, and assists in
 the execution. Could not honour, duty, or nature have
 moved his heart towards an absent father ? The machine,
 adds he, has not the least appearance of probability, in-
 asmuch as the Goddess conducts him to every place, ex-
 cept only where Ulysses resides ; of which she ought by no
 means to be ignorant, upon the account of her Divinity.

Book I. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 23

There, warm with filial love, the cause inquire
That from his realm retards his god-like fire : 121
Deliv'ring early to the voice of fame
The promise of a great, immortal name.

She said : the sandals of celestial mold
Fledg'd with Ambrosial plumes, and rich with
gold, 125

Surround her feet ; with these sublime she sails
Th' aerial space, and mounts the winged gales :
O'er earth and ocean wide prepar'd to soar,
Her dreaded arm a beamy jav'lin bore, 129
Pond'rous and vast ; which, when her fury burns,
Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'erturns.
From high Olympus prone her flight she bends,
And in the realm of Ithaca descends.

Her lineaments divine, the grave disguise
Of Mentès' form conceal'd from human eyes : 135

But surely nothing can be more natural, than for a son, in order to gain intelligence of an absent father, to inquire in those places, and of those persons, where and from whom he is most likely to have information. Such is the conduct of Telemachus : and poetry, which delights in the wonderful, because this conduct agrees with wisdom, ascribes it to Minerva the Goddess of it. No doubt but Minerva knew where Ulysses resided : but men must act like men ; such an immediate interposition as Rapisan requires, had stopped at once the fountain of the poet's invention. If what a poet invents be natural, it is justifiable ; and he may give the rein to his imagination, if he restrain it from running into extravagance and wildness.

24 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I,

(Mentes, the monarch of the Taphian land)

A glitt'ring spear wav'd awful in her hand.

There in the portal plac'd, the heav'n-born maid
Enormous riot and mis-rule survey'd.

v. 136. *Mentes, the monarch of the Taphian land.*] We are told by tradition, that Homer was so sensible of friendship, that to do honour to his particular friends, he immortalised their names in his poems. In the Iliad he has shewn his gratitude to Tychius; and in the Odyssey, to Mentes, Phemius, and Mentor. This Mentes was a famous merchant of the isle of Leucade, who received Homer at Smyrna, and made him his companion in all his voyages. It is to this Mentes we owe the two poems of Homer; for the poet in all probability had never wrote them without those lights and informations he received, and the discoveries he was enabled to make, by those travels. Homer is not contented to give his name to the king of the Taphians, but feigns also that the Goddess of wisdom chose to appear in his shape preferably to that of all the kings who were nearer neighbours to Ithaca. Eustathius thinks there might have been a real king of Taphos of this name, who was a friend to Ulysses. This may possibly be; but I would chuse to adhere rather to the old tradition, as it does honour to friendship. *Dacier.*

v. 139. *Enormous riot and mis-rule.*] This is the first appearance of the suitors; and the poet has drawn their pictures in such colours, as are agreeable to their characters through the whole poem. They are, as Horace expresses it,

“ — — — Fruges consumere nati,

“ Sponsi Penelopes, Nebulones” —

The poet gives a fine contrast between them and Telemachus; he entertains himself with his own thoughts, weighs the sum of things, and beholds with a virtuous

Book I. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 25

On hides of beeves, before the palace gate, 140
 (Sad spoils of luxury) the suitors sat.
 With rival art, and ardour in their mien,
 At chefs they vie, to captivate the queen ;
 Divining of their loves. Attending nigh,
 A menial train the flowing bowl supply : 145
 Others, apart, the spacious hall prepare,
 And form the costly feast with busy care.

forrow the disorders of the suitors : he appears (like Ulysses among his transformed companions in the tenth book) a wise man, among brutes.

v. 143. *At chefs they vie to captivate the queen ;
 Divining of their loves.——]*

There are great disputes what this game was, at which the suitors played. Athenæus relates it from Apian the Grammarian, who had it from Cteson a native of Ithaca, that the sport was in this manner: The number of the suitors being one hundred and eight, they equally divided their men or balls ; that is to say, fifty-four on each side ; these were placed on the board opposite to each other. Between the two sides was a vacant space, in the midst of which was the main mark, or *Queen*, the point which all were to aim at. They took their turns by lot ; he who took or displaced that mark, got his own in its place ; and if by a second man, he again took it, without touching any of the others, he won the game ; and it passed as an omen of obtaining his mistress. This principal mark, or *Queen*, was called by whatever name the gamesters pleased : and the suitors gave it the name of *Penelope*.

It is said, this game was invented by Palamedes during the siege of Troy. [*Sophocles in Palam.*] *Eustathius. Spon-
 danus. Dacier.*

There young Telemachus, his bloomy face
 Glowing celestial sweet, with god-like grace
 Amid the circle shines : but hope and fear 150
 (Painful vicissitude!) his bosom tear.
 Now imag'd in his mind, he sees restor'd
 In peace and joy, the people's rightful lord ;
 The proud oppressors fly the vengeful sword. }
 While his fond soul these fancied triumphs
 swell'd ; 155

The stranger guest, the royal youth beheld :
 Griev'd that a visitant so long should wait
 Unmark'd, unhonour'd, at a monarch's gate ;
 Instant he flew with hospitable haste,
 And the new friend with courteous air embrac'd.
 Stranger ! whoe'er thou art, securely rest, 161
 Affianc'd in my faith, a friendly guest :
 Approach the dome, the social banquet share,
 And then the purpose of thy soul declare.

Thus affable and mild, the prince precedes, 165
 And to the dome th' unknown Celestial leads.

v. 157. *Griev'd that a visitant so long should wait.*] The reader will lose much of the pleasure of this poem, if he reads it without the reflection, that he peruses one of the most ancient books in the world ; it sets before him persons, places, and actions that existed three thousand years ago : here we have an instance of the humanity of those early ages : Telemachus pays a reverence to this stranger, only because he is a stranger : he attends him in person, and welcomes him with all the openness of ancient hospitality.

Book I. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 27

The spear receiving from her hand, he plac'd
 Against a column, fair with sculpture grac'd ;
 Where seemly rang'd in peaceful order stood
 Ulysses' arms, now long difus'd to blood. 170
 He led the Goddess to the sov'reign seat,
 Her feet supported with a stool of state ;
 (A purple carpet spread the pavement wide)
 Then drew his seat, familiar, to her side ;
 Far from the suitor-train, a brutal crowd, 175
 With insolence, and wine, elate and loud :
 Where the free guest, unnoted, might relate,
 If haply conscious, of his father's fate.
 The golden ew'r a maid obsequious brings,
 Replenish'd from the cool, translucent springs ; 180
 With copious water the bright vase supplies
 A silver laver, of capacious size :
 They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
 They heap the glitt'ring canisters with bread :
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste, 185
 Of choicest sort and favour, rich repast !

v. 185, &c. *The feast describ'd.*] There is nothing that has drawn more ridicule upon Homer, than the frequent descriptions of his entertainments : it has been judg'd, that he was more than ordinarily delighted with them, since he omits no opportunity to describe them ; nay his temperance has not been unsuspected, according to that verse of Horace,

“ Laudibus arguitur vini vinofus Homerus.”

But we must not condemn without stronger evidence : a man may commend a sumptuous entertainment, or good

Delicious wines th' attending herald brought ;
 The gold gave lustre to the purple draught.
 Lur'd with the vapour of the fragrant feast,
 In rush'd the suitors with voracious haste : 190

wines, without being either a drunkard or a glutton. But since there are so many entertainments described in the poem, it may not be improper to give *this* some explanation.

They wash before the feast ; perhaps, says Eustathius, because they always, at the feast, made libations to the Gods. The ewer was of gold, the vessel from whence the water was poured of silver, and the cups out of which they drank, were of gold.

A damsel attends Mentis, but heralds wait upon the suitors : Eustathius observes a decency in this conduct ; the suitors were lewd debauchees, and consequently a woman of modesty would have been an improper attendant upon such a company. Beautiful youths attend the company in quality of cup-bearers.

A matron who has the charge of the household (*ραμίνη*) brings in the bread and the cold meats, for so Eustathius interprets *εἰδάρη* ; an officer, whose employ it was to portion out the victuals, brings in the meats that furnished out the rest of the entertainment ; and after the feast, a bard diverts them with vocal and instrumental music.

Dacier is in great pain about the cold victuals ; she is afraid lest the reader should think them the leavings of a former day : and tells us they might possibly be in the nature of our cold tongues, jambons, &c. But I think such fears to be groundless : we must have reference to the customs of those early ages ; and if it was customary for cold meats to be served up (neither is it necessary to suppose them the leavings of the former entertainment) it can be no disgrace to the hospitality of Telemachus.

Marshall'd in order due, to each a few'r
 Presents, to bathe his hands, a radiant ew'r.
 Luxurious then they feast. Observant round
 Gay stripling youths the brimming goblets crown'd.
 The rage of hunger quell'd, they all advance, 195
 And form to measur'd airs the mazy dance:
 To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre,
 Whose hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire:
 Phemius, whose voice divine could sweetest sing
 High strains, responsive to the vocal string. 200
 Meanwhile, in whispers to his heav'nly guest
 His indignation thus the prince exprest.
 Indulge my rising grief, whilst these (my friend)
 With song and dance the pompous revel end.

v. 197. *To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre.*] In ancient times, princes entertained in their families certain learned and wise men, who were both poets and philosophers, and not only made it their business to amuse and delight, but to promote wisdom and morality. Ulysses, at his departure for Troy, left one of these with Penelope: and it was usual to consign in this manner the care of their wives and families to the poets of those days, as appears from a signal passage in the third book, verse (of the original) 267, &c. To this man Homer gives the name of Phemius; to celebrate one of his friends, who was so called, and who had been his preceptor (says Eustathius.) I must add one remark, that though he places his master here in no very good company, yet he guards his character from any imputation, by telling us, that he attended the suitors by compulsion. This is not only a great instance of his gratitude, but also of his tenderness and delicacy.

Light is the dance, and doubly sweet the lays, 205
 When, for the dear delight another pays.
 His treasur'd stores these cormorants consume,
 Whose bones, defrauded of a regal tomb
 And common turf, lie naked on the plain,
 Or doom'd to welter in the whelming main. 210
 Should he return, that troop so blithe and bold,
 With purple robes inwrought, and stiff with gold,
 Precipitant in fear would wing their flight,
 And curse their cumb'rous pride's unweildy weight.
 But ah I dream!—th' appointed hour is fled, 215
 And hope too long with vain delusion fed,
 Deaf to the rumour of fallacious fame,
 Gives to the roll of death his glorious name!
 With venial freedom let me now demand
 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land: 220
 Sincere, from whence began thy course, recite,
 And to what ship I owe the friendly freight?
 Now first to me this visit dost thou deign,
 Or number'd in my father's social train?
 All who deserv'd his choice, he made his own, 225
 And curious much to know, he far was known.

v. 225. *All who deserv'd his choice—*] It is evident from this and many other places in the Iliad, that hospitality was hereditary; an happiness and honour peculiar to those heroic ages. And surely nothing can set the character of Ulysses in a more agreeable point of light, than what Telemachus here delivers of it: "He was the friend of all mankind." Eustathius observes, that ἐπιτροφῆ has a middle signification; that it implies that Ulysses behaved

My birth I boast (the blue-ey'd Virgin cries)
 From great Anchialus, renown'd and wife :
 Mentès my name ; I rule the Taphian race,
 Whose bounds the deep circumfluent waves embrace : 230

A duteous people, and industrious isle,
 To naval arts inur'd, and stormy toil.
 Freightèd with iron from my native land,
 I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand ;

benevolently to all men ; or that all men behaved benevolently to Ulysses : either sense makes Ulysses a very amiable person : he must be a friend to all men, to whom all men are friends.

v. 234. *I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand.*] In the country of the Brutians, in the lower part of Italy, was a town called Temese. That Homer here meant this city, and not one of the same name in Cyprus, appears not only because this was famous for works of brass, but because (as Strabo observes) Ithaca lay in the direct way from Taphos to this city of the Brutii ; whereas it was considerably out of the way to pass by Ithaca to that of Cyprus. The same author says, that the rooms for preparing of brass were remaining in his time, though then out of use.

Ovid. Met. xv.

“ Hippotadæque domos regis, Temesefque metalla.”

And Statius, *Sylv.*

“ — — — se totis Temese dedit hausta metallis.”

Bochart is of opinion, that the name of Temese was given to this town by the Phœnicians, from the brass it produced, Temes in their language signifying fusion of me-

To gain by commerce, for the labour'd mafs, 235
 A juft proportion of refulgent brafs.
 Far from your capital my fhip refides
 At Reithrus, and fecure at anchor rides ;
 Where waving groves on airy Neion grow,
 Supremely tall, and fhade the deeps below. 240
 Thence to re-vifit your imperial dome,
 An old hereditary gueft I come :
 Your father's friend. Laertes can relate
 Our faith unspotted, and its early date ;
 Who, preft with heart-corroding grief and years,
 To the gay court a rural fhed prefers, 246

tals : an art to which the Phœnicians much applied them-
 felves. *Eufthius. Dacier.*

v. 245. *Laertes's retirement.*] This moft beautiful paffage
 of Laertes has not efaped the cenfure of the criticks :
 they fay he acts an unmanly part, he forgets that he is a
 king, and reduces himfelf unworthily into the condition
 of a fervant. Eufthius gives two reafons for his retire-
 ment, which answer thofe objections ; the firft is, that he
 could not endure to fee the outrage and infolence of the
 fuitors ; the fecond, that his grief for Ulyffes makes him
 abandon fociety, and prefer his vineyard to his court. This
 is undoubtedly the picture of human nature under afflic-
 tion ; for forrow loves folitude. Thus it is, as Dacier
 well obferves, that Menedemus in Terence laments his
 loft fon : Menedemus is the picture of Laertes. Nor does
 it make any difference, that the one is a king, the other
 a perfon of private ftation : kings are but ennobled huma-
 nity, and are liable, as other men, to as great, if not
 greater fenfibility.

Where sole of all his train, a matron sage
Supports with homely food his drooping age,
With feeble steps from marshalling his vines
Returning sad, when toilsome day declines. 250

With friendly speed, induc'd by erring fame,
To hail Ulysses' safe return I came ;
But still the frown of some celestial Pow'r
With envious joy retards the blisful hour.
Let not your soul be sunk in sad despair ; 255
He lives, he breathes this heav'nly vital air,
Among a savage race, whose shelly bounds
With ceaseless roar the foaming deep furrounds.

The word *ἐγέρων* (*creeping* about his vineyard) has also given offence, as it carries an idea of meanness with it; but Eustathius observes, that it excellently expresses the melancholy of Laertes, and denotes no meanness of spirit: the same word is applied to the great Achilles in the Iliad, when he laments at the obsequies of Patroclus; and Horace no doubt had it in his view,

“ — — — Tacitum sylvas inter-reptare salubres.”

v. 257. *Among a savage race, &c.*] It is the observation of Eustathius, that what Minerva here delivers bears resemblance to the Oracles, in which part is false, and part true: that Ulysses is detained in an Island, is a truth; that he is detained by Barbarians, a falsehood: this is done by the Goddess, that she may be thought to be really a man, as she appears to be; she speaks with the dubiousness of a man, not the certainty of a Goddess; she raises his expectation by shewing she has an insight into futurity; and to engage his belief, she discovers in part the truth to Telemachus. Neither was it necessary or conve-

The thoughts which roll within my ravish'd breast,
 To me, no fear, th' inspiring Gods suggest ; 260
 Nor skill'd, nor studious, with prophetick eye
 To judge the winged omens of the sky.
 Yet hear this certain speech, nor deem it vain ;
 Tho' adamantine bonds the chief restrain,
 The dire restraint his wisdom will defeat, 265
 And soon restore him to his regal seat.
 But, gen'rous youth ! sincere and free declare,
 Are you, of manly growth, his royal heir ?
 For sure Ulysses in your look appears,
 The same his features, if the same his years. 270
 Such was that face, on which I dwelt with joy
 E'er Greece assembled stemm'd the tides to Troy ;
 But parting then for that detested shore,
 Our eyes unhappy ! never greeted more.
 To prove a genuine birth (the prince replies)
 On female truth assenting faith relies ; 276

nient for Telemachus to know the whole truth : for if he
 had known that Ulysses inhabited a desert, detained by a
 Goddess, he must of consequence have known of his re-
 turn, (for he that could certify the one could certify the
 other) and so had never gone in search of him ; and it
 would hence have happened, that Homer had been de-
 prived of giving us those graces of Poetry which arise
 from the voyage of Telemachus. *Eustathius.*

v. 275. *To prove a genuine birth, &c.]* There is an ap-
 pearance of something very shocking in this speech of Te-
 lemachus. It literally runs thus: *My mother assures me*
that I am the son of Ulysses, but I know it not. It seems to

Thus manifest of right, I build my claim
Sure-founded on a fair maternal fame,

reflect upon his mother's chastity, as if he had a doubt of his own legitimacy. This seeming simplicity in Telemachus, says Eustathius, is the effect of a troubled spirit; it is grief that makes him doubt if he can be the son of the great, the generous Ulysses; it is no reflection upon Penelope, and consequently no fault in Telemachus: it is an undoubted truth that the mother only knows the legitimacy of the child: thus Euripides,

Ἡ μὲν, γὰρ αὐτῆς οἶδεν ὄντα, ὃδ' οἶέαι.

that is, the mother knows the child, the father only believes it.

Thus also Menander,

Αὐτὸν γὰρ εἶδεις οἶδε, τῷ πότε' ἐγένετο·

Ἀλλ' ὑπονοῶμεν πάντες, ἢ πιστεύσομεν.

that is, No man knows assuredly who begot him, we only guess it, and believe it.

Aristotle in his *Rhetorick* is also of this opinion;

Ἄριστα περὶ τῶν τέκνων κρίνουσιν αἱ γυναῖκες.

What I have here said, is literally translated from Eustathius, and if it edifies the reader I am content. But the meaning of the passage is this, Mentès asks Telemachus if he be the son of Ulysses; he replies, "So my mother assures me; but nothing sure so wretched as I am could proceed from that great man."

But however this may be reconciled to truth, I believe few ladies would take it as a compliment, if their sons should tell them there was room to doubt of their legitimacy; there may be abundance of truth in it, and yet very little decency.

Ulysses' son : but happier he, whom fate
 Hath plac'd beneath the storms which tofs the
 great ! 280

Happier the son, whose hoary fire is blest
 With humble affluence, and domestick rest !
 Happier than I, to future empire born,
 But doom'd a father's wretched fate to mourn !

To whom, with aspect mild, the guest divine :
 Oh true descendant of a scepter'd line ! 289

The Gods, a glorious fate from anguish free
 To chaste Penelope's increase decree.
 But say, yon' jovial troop so gaily drest,
 Is this a bridal or a friendly feast ! 290

Or from their deed I rightlier may divine,
 Unseemly flown with insolence and wine ;
 Unwelcome revellers, whose lawless joy
 Pains the sage ear, and hurts the sober eye ?

Magnificence of old (the prince reply'd) 295
 Beneath our roof with virtue could reside ;
 Unblam'd abundance crown'd the royal board,
 What time this dome rever'd her prudent lord ;
 Who now (so Heav'n decrees) is doom'd to mourn,
 Bitter constraint ! erroneous and forlorn. 300

Better the chief, on Ilion's hostile plain,
 Had fall'n surrounded with his warlike train ;
 Or safe return'd, the race of glory past,
 New to his friends embrace, had breath'd his last !

Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes would
raise

Historick marbles, to record his praise; 306

His praise, eternal on the faithful stone,

Had with transmissive honour grac'd his son.

Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,

Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost : 310

Vanish'd at once ! unheard-of, and unknown !

And I his heir in misery alone.

Nor for a dear, lost father only flow

The filial tears, but woe succeeds to woe :

To tempt the spouseless queen with am'rous wiles,

Resort the nobles from the neighb'ring isles ; 316

v. 309. *Now snatch'd by harpies, &c.*] The meaning of this expression is, that Ulysses has not had the rites of sepulture. This among the ancients was esteemed the greatest of calamities, as it hindered the shades of the deceased from entering into the state of the happy.

v. 315. *To tempt the spouseless queen — Resort the nobles.*] It is necessary to reconcile the conduct of the suitors to probability, since it has so great a share in the process of the Odyssey. It may seem incredible that Penelope, who is a queen, in whom the supreme power is lodged, should not dismiss such unwelcome intruders, especially since many of them were her own subjects : besides, it seems an extraordinary way of courtship in them, to ruin the person to whom they make their addresses.

To solve this objection we must consider the nature of the Grecian governments : the chief men of the land had great authority : though the government was monarchical, it was not despotick : Laertes was retired, and disabled

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From Samos, circled with th' Iönian main,
 Dulichium, and Zacynthus' silvan reign :
 Ev'n with presumptuous hope her bed t' ascend,
 The lords of Ithaca their right pretend. 320

She seems attentive to their pleaded vows,
 Her heart detesting what her ear allows.
 They, vain expectants of the bridal hour,
 My stores in riotous expence devour,
 In feast and dance the mirthful months employ,
 And meditate my doom, to crown their joy. 326

With tender pity touch'd the Goddeſs cry'd :
 Soon may kind Heav'n a ſure relief provide,
 Soon may your fire diſcharge the vengeance due,
 And all your wrongs the proud oppreſſors rue!
 Oh ! in that portal ſhould the chief appear, 331
 Each hand tremendous with a brazen ſpear,

In radiant panoply his limbs incas'd ;
 (For ſo of old my father's court he grac'd,
 When ſocial mirth unbent his ſerious ſoul, 335
 O'er the full banquet, and the ſprightly bowl)

He then from Ephyré, the fair domain
 Of Ilus, ſprung from Jaſon's royal ſtrain, }
 Meaſur'd a length of ſeas, a toilsome length, in vain. }

with age ; Telemachus was yet in his minority ; and the
 fear of any violence either againſt her own perſon, or a-
 gainſt her ſon, might deter Penelope from uſing any en-
 deavours to remove men of ſuch insolence, and ſuch power.
Dacier.

Book I. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 39

For voyaging to learn the direful art 340
 To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart ;
 Observant of the Gods, and sternly just,
 Ilus refus'd t' impart the baneful trust :
 With friendlier zeal my father's soul was fir'd,
 The drugs he knew, and gave the boon desir'd.
 Appear'd he now with such heroick port, 346
 As then conspicuous at the Taphian court ;
 Soon should yon' boasters cease their haughty strife,
 Or each atone his guilty love with life.

v. 341. *To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart.*] It is necessary to explain this passage. It seems at first view, as if Ulysses had requested what a good man could not grant. Ilus, says Mentès, denied the poison, because he feared the anger of the Gods ; and the poison itself is called by Homer *ἀνδροφόνον*, as if it were designed against mankind. Eustathius defends Ulysses variously : he intended, says he, to employ it against beasts only, that infested his country, or in hunting. He assigns another reason, and says that the poet is preparing the way to give an air of probability to the destruction of the suitors. He poisons his arrows, that every wound may be mortal ; on this account the poison may be called *ἀνδροφόνον* ; for it is certain in the wars of Troy poisoned arrows were not in use, for many persons who were wounded recovered : so that of necessity they must be reserved for domestick occasions. From what has been said we may collect the reason why Anchialus granted the poison to Ulysses, and Ilus denied it ; Anchialus was the friend of Ulysses, and knew that he would not employ it to any ill purpose : but Ilus, who was a stranger to him, was afraid lest he should abuse it.
Eustathius.

But of his wish'd return the care resign ; 350
 Be future vengeance to the pow'rs divine.
 My sentence hear : with stern distaste avow'd,
 To their own districts drive the suitor-crowd :
 When next the morning warms the purple east,
 Convoke the peerage, and the Gods attest ; 355
 The sorrows of your inmost soul relate ;
 And form sure plans to save the sinking state.
 Should second love a pleasing flame inspire,
 And the chaste queen connubial rites require ;
 Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair 360
 To great Icarius, whose paternal care
 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice
 With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.

v. 360. *Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair.*] I will lay before the reader literally what Eustathius observes upon these words. There is a solecism, says he, in these verses or words, that cannot be reduced to the rules of construction. It should be μήτηρ, not μήτέρα ἀψ' ἱτω. How then comes the accusative case to be used instead of the nominative? Mentès, adds he, may be supposed to have intended to have said ἀποπέμψον, (send thy mother away;) but considering in the midst of the sentence, that such advice was not suitable to be given to Telemachus, he checks himself and suppresses ἀποπέμψον; and no other word immediately occurring, that required an accusative case, he falls into a solecism.

But perhaps this is more ingenious than true; though Mentès was in haste when he spoke; Homer was not, when he composed it. Might not an error creep into the original by the negligence of a transcriber, who might write μήτέρα for μήτηρ? This is the more probable, because the

Then let this dictate of my love prevail :
 Instant, to foreign realms prepare to fail, 365
 To learn your father's fortunes : Fame may prove,
 Or omen'd voice, (the messenger of Jove)
 Propitious to the search. Direct your toil
 Thro' the wide ocean first to sandy Pyle ;
 Of Nestor, hoary sage, his doom demand : 370
 Thence speed your voyage to the Spartan strand ;
 For young Atrides to th' Achaian coast
 Arriv'd the last of all the victor host.
 If yet Ulysses views the light ; forbear,
 'Till the fleet Hours restore the circling year. 375

one stands in the verse in every respect as well as the other.

What Eustathius adds is very absurd : he says that Telemachus must observe both the interpretations, either send thy mother away, or let thy mother retire. So that the advice was double, send thy mother away if thou dost not love her ; but if thou art unwilling to grieve her, let her recess be voluntary.

v. 367. *Omen'd voice* — *of Jove.*] There is a difficulty in this passage. In any case of enquiry, any words that were heard by accident were called by the Latins, *Omens* ; by Homer, *the voice of Jupiter* ; and he files them so, because it is through his providence that those words come to our knowledge : κλέος signifies *fame* or *rumour* ; and the ancients referred all voices or sounds to Jupiter ; and filed him Ζεὺς πανομφαῖος. So that the voice of Jove implies any words that we hear by chance, from whence we can draw any thing that gives light to our concerns or enquiries. *Dacier. Eustathius.*

But if his foul hath wing'd the destin'd flight,
 Inhabitant of deep disastrous night ;
 Homeward with pious speed repass the main,
 To the pale shade funereal rites ordain,
 Plant the fair column o'er the vacant grave, 380
 A hero's honours let the hero have.
 With decent grief the royal dead deplor'd,
 For the chaste queen select an equal lord.
 Then let revenge your daring mind employ,
 By fraud or force the suitor-train destroy, 385 }
 And starting into manhood, scorn the boy.
 Hast thou not heard how young Orestes, fir'd
 With great revenge, immortal praise acquir'd ?
 His virgin-sword, Ægysthus' veins imbru'd ;
 The murd'rer fell, and blood aton'd for blood, 390

v. 387. *Hast thou not heard, &c.*] It may seem that this example of Orestes does not come fully up to the purpose intended : there is a wide difference in the circumstances : Orestes slew an adulterer, and a single person, with an adulteress. The designs of Telemachus are not against one, but many enemies ; neither are they adulterers, nor have they slain the father of Telemachus, as is the case of Orestes ; nor is Penelope an adulteress. The intent therefore of the Goddess is only to shew what a glorious act it is to defend our parents : Orestes, says Mentis, is every where celebrated for honouring his father, and thou shalt obtain equal honour by defending thy mother.

The sense that *παλαιοφόνευς* here bears is remarkable, it signifies not only a person who kills his own father, but who kills the father of any other person. *Eustathius*.

Book I. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 43

O greatly blest'd with every blooming grace !
 With equal steps the paths of glory trace ;
 Join to that royal youth's your rival name,
 And shine eternal in the sphere of fame. —
 But my associates now my stay deplore, 395
 Impatient on the hoarse-resounding shore.
 Thou, heedful of advice, secure proceed ;
 My praise the precept is, be thine the deed.

The counsel of my friend (the youth rejoin'd)
 Imprints conviction on my grateful mind. 400
 So fathers speak (persuasive speech and mild)
 Their sage experience to the fav'rite child.
 But, since to part, for sweet refection due
 The genial viands let my train renew :
 And the rich pledge of plighted faith receive, 405
 Worthy the heir of Ithaca to give.

Defer the promis'd boon, (the Goddess cries,
 Celestial azure bright'ning in her eyes)
 And let me now regain the Reithrian port :
 From Temesé return'd, your royal court 410
 I shall revisit ; and that pledge receive ;
 And gifts, memorial of our friendship, leave.

Abrupt, with eagle-speed she cut the sky ;
 Instant invisible to mortal eye.

v. 413. — — *With eagle-speed she cut the sky ;*
Instant invisible ———]

I pass over the several interpretations that have been given
 to the word *ωνοπαια* ; some say it implies she flew up the
 chimney, &c. In reality it signifies a species of an eagle :

Then first he recognis'd th' ætherial guest; 415
 Wonder and joy alternate fire his breast :
 Heroick thoughts, infus'd, his heart dilate :
 Revolving much his father's doubtful fate,
 At length, compos'd, he join'd the suitor-throng ;
 Hush'd in attention to the warbled song. 420

but it may also signify the same as ὁφανεῖς (invisible,) either of the latter senses are natural, or both together, *like an eagle she disappeared.* Eustathius.

v. 420. *Hush'd in attention to the warbled song.*] There may be two reasons why this is inserted ; either the suitors were pleased with the sweetness of the song, or the subject of it ; they sat attentive to hear the death of Ulysses, in the process of his story. This gives us a reason why immediately Penelope descended to stop the song ; she feared lest he might touch upon the story of Ulysses, and say that he died in his return. This would have reduced her to the utmost necessity, and she could not have deferred to marry. Phemius would have certainly found credit, for poets were believed to be inspired by the Gods ; they were looked upon as prophets, and to have something of divinity in them, as appears from Demodocus in the eighth book of the Odyssey. Besides there was a further necessity to put a stop to the song. If Phemius had declared him to be dead, Penelope could not have avoided marriage ; if alive, the suitors might have desisted, or armed themselves against Ulysses, and then their deaths, one of the principal incidents of the poem, could not have followed ; neither could Telemachus have gone in search of his father, if he had foreknown his death, or sudden return. It is therefore artful in the poet to cut the song short ; he reserves the story of Ulysses for future narration ; and brings all this about by a very probable method, by the inter-

Book I. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 45

His tender theme the charming lyrist chose
 Minerva's anger, and the direful woes
 Which voyaging from Troy the victors bore,
 While storms vindictive intercept the shore.
 The shrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds, 425
 Reflecting to the queen the silver sounds.
 With grief renew'd the weeping fair descends ;
 Their sov'reign's step a virgin train attends :
 A veil of richest texture wrought, she wears,
 And silent to the joyous hall repairs. 430
 There from the portal, with her mild command
 Thus gently checks the minstrel's tuneful hand.
 Phemius ! let acts of Gods, and heroes old,
 What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,
 Attemper'd to the lyre, your voice employ ; 435
 Such the pleas'd ear will drink with silent joy.
 But oh ! forbear that dear, disastrous name,
 To sorrow sacred, and secure of fame :
 My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound,
 And ev'ry piercing note inflicts a wound. 440

position of Penelope, who requests that some other story may be chosen, a story that she can hear without sorrow.

It is very customary for women to be present at the entertainments of men ; as appears from the conduct of Helen, Arete, Nausica, and Penelope, in divers parts of the Odyssey : she is here introduced with the greatest decency ; she enters not the room, but stands with tears at the threshold ; and even at that distance appears with her face shaded by a veil. *Eustathius.*

Why, dearest object of my duteous love,
 (Reply'd the prince) will you the bard reprove?
 Oft', Jove's ætherial rays (resistless fire)
 The chanter's soul and raptur'd song inspire;
 Instinct divine! nor blame severe his choice, 445
 Warbling the Grecian woes with harp and voice:
 For novel lays attract our ravish'd ears;
 But old, the mind with inattention hears;
 Patient permit the sadly-pleasing strain;
 Familiar now with grief, your tears refrain, 450
 And in the publick woe forget your own;
 You weep not for a perish'd lord, alone.
 What Greeks, now wand'ring in the Stygian gloom,
 With your Ulysses shar'd an equal doom!

v. 443. *Oft', Jove's ætherial rays, &c.*] Telemachus here reproves his mother for commanding Phemius to desist, or not to make Ulysses the subject of his song: by saying, that it was not in the poet's own power to chuse his subject, which was frequently dictated and inspired by the Gods. This is a particular instance of the opinion the ancients held as to the immediate inspiration of their poets. The words in the original evidently bear this sense. *If the subject displease you, it is not the poet, but Jupiter is to blame, who inspires men of invention, as he himself pleases.* And Madam Dacier strangely mistakes this passage, in rendering it, *it is not the poet, but Jupiter, who is the cause of our misfortunes, for it is he who dispenses to wretched mortals good or evil as he pleases.* At the same time she acknowledges the word ἀλφῆσαι, which she here renders *laborious*, or *wretched*, to signify *persons of wit*, in the beginning of lib. vi. and *persons of skill and ability in their art*, in lib. xiii.

Book I. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 47

Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil 455
And various labours of the loom, beguile ;
There rule, from palace-cares remote and free,
That care to man belongs, and most to me.

Mature beyond his years the queen admires
His sage reply, and with her train retires. 460
Then swelling sorrows burst their former bounds,
With echoing grief afresh the dome resounds ;
'Till Pallas, piteous of her plaintive cries,
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Meantime, rekindl'd at the royal charms, 465
Tumultuous love each beating bosom warms ;
Intemp'rate rage a wordy war began ;
But bold Telemachus assum'd the man.
Instant (he cry'd) your female discord end,
Ye deedless boasters ! and the song attend ; 470
Obey that sweet compulsion, nor profane
With dissonance the smooth melodious strain.

v. 455. *Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil, &c.]*
These verses are taken literally from the sixth book of the Iliad, except that *μῦθος* is inserted instead of *πόλεμος* ; Eustathius explains the passage thus : *Women are not forbid intirely to speak, for women are talking animals, λαλητὸν ζῶον, they have the faculty of talking, and indeed are rational creatures ; but they must not give too much liberty to that unruly member, in the company of men. Sophocles advises well,*

Γόναί, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἢ Λίσσιν φέρεται.

O woman, silence is the ornament of thy sex. Madam Dacier, though she plunders almost every thing, has spared this observation.

Pacifick now prolong the jovial feast ;
 But when the dawn reveals the rosy east,
 I, to the peers assembled, shall propose 475
 The firm resolve, I here in few disclose.
 No longer live the cankers of my court ;
 All to your several states with speed resort ;
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse. 480
 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flock shall bleed ;
 Judge and revenge my right, impartial Jove ! —
 By him and all th' immortal thrones above,
 (A sacred oath) each proud oppressor, slain, 485
 Shall with inglorious gore this marble stain.

Aw'd by the prince, thus haughty, bold, and
 young,
 Rage gnaw'd the lip, and wonder chain'd the tongue.
 Silence at length the gay Antinous broke,
 Constrain'd a smile, and thus ambiguous spoke. 490
 What God to your untutor'd youth affords
 This headlong torrent of amazing words ?

v. 491. *The speech of Antinous.*] Antinous and Eurymachus are Ithacensians, and are called the chief of the suitors. It is therefore necessary to distinguish their characters ; Antinous is violent, and determined against Ulysses ; Eurymachus more gentle and subtle ; Antinous derides, Eurymachus flatters.

This speech of Antinous is a concealed raillery ; he tells Telemachus, that Jove inspires his soul with wisdom, but means that his education has been such, that he had learn-

May Jove delay thy reign, and cumber late
So bright a genius with the toils of state !

Those toils (Telemachus serene replies) 495
Have charms, with all their weight, t'allure the wife.

ed nothing from man ; he wishes (out of a seemingly kind concern for him) that he may never reign in Ithaca, because the weight of a crown is a burden ; and concludes with mentioning his hereditary title to it, to insinuate that it is his by descent only, and not by merit.

Telemachus, in his answer, wisely dissembles the affront of Antinous ; he takes it in the better sense, and seems to differ only in opinion about the regality. Think you, says he, that to be a king is to be miserable ? To be a king, in my judgment, is to enjoy affluence and honour. He asserts his claim to the succession of his father, yet seems to decline it, to lay the suspicions of the suitors asleep, that they may not prevent the measures he takes to obtain it. *Eustathius*.

The speech of Eurymachus confirms the former observation, that this suitor is of a more soft and moderate behaviour than Antinous : he cloaths ill designs with a seeming humanity, and appears a friend, while he carries on the part of an enemy : Telemachus had said, that if it was the will of Jupiter, he would ascend the throne of Ithaca : Eurymachus answers, that this was as the Gods should determine ; an insinuation that they regarded not his claim from his father. Telemachus said he would maintain himself in the possession of his present inheritance : Eurymachus wishes that no one may arrive to dispossess him : the latent meaning of which is, " we of your own country are sufficient for that design." If these observations of Eustathius be true, Eurymachus was not a less enemy than Antinous, but a better dissembler.

Fast by the throne obsequious fame resides,
And wealth incessant rolls her golden tides.
Nor let Antinous rage, if strong desire
Of wealth and fame a youthful bosom fire: 500
Elect by Jove his delegate of sway,
With joyous pride the summons I'd obey.
Whene'er Ulysses roams the realm of night,
Shou'd factious pow'r dispute my lineal right,
Some other Greeks a fairer claim may plead; 505
To your pretence their title wou'd precede.
At least, the scepter lost, I still should reign
Sole o'er my vassals, and domestick train.

To this Eurymachus. To heav'n alone
Refer the choice to fill the vacant throne. 510
Your patrimonial stores in peace possess;
Undoubted, all your filial claim confess:
Your private right shou'd impious pow'r invade,
The peers of Ithaca wou'd arm in aid.
But say, that stranger-guest who late withdrew, 115
What and from whence? his name and lineage shew.
His grave demeanour, and majestic grace
Speak him descended of no vulgar race:
Did he some loan of antient right require,
Or came fore-runner of your scepter'd fire? 520

Oh son of Polybus! the prince replies,
No more my fire will glad these longing eyes:
The queen's fond hope inventive rumour cheers,
Or vain diviners' dreams divert her fears.

Book I. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 51

That stranger-guest the Taphian realms obeys, 525
A realm defended with incircling seas.
Mentes, an ever-honour'd name, of old
High in Ulysses' social list inroll'd.

Thus he, tho' conscious of th' etherial guest,
Answer'd evasive of the fly request. 530
Meantime the lyre rejoins the sprightly lay ;
Love-dittied airs, and dance, conclude the day.
But when the star of eve with golden light
Adorn'd the matron-brow of sable night ;
The mirthful train dispersing quit the court, 535
And to their several domes to rest resort.
A tow'ring structure to the palace join'd ;
To this his steps the thoughtful prince inclin'd ;
In his pavilion there, to sleep repairs ;
The lighted torch, the sage Euryclea bears: 540
(Daughter of Ops, the just Pisenor's son,
For twenty beeves by great Laertes won ;

v. 540. *The sage Euryclea.*] Euryclea was a very aged person ; she was bought by Laertes to nurse Ulysses ; and in her old age attends Telemachus : she cost Laertes twenty oxen ; that is, a certain quantity of money (*ὕλης μετ' ἀλλήλων*) which would buy twenty oxen ; or perhaps the form of an ox was stamped upon the metal, and from thence had its appellation.

The simplicity of these heroick times is remarkable ; an old woman is the only attendant upon the son of a king : she lights him to his apartment, takes care of his cloaths, and hangs them up at the side of his bed. Greatness then consisted not in shew, but in the mind : this conduct proceeded not from the meanness of poverty, but from the simplicity of manners. *Eustathius.*

In rosy prime with charms attractive grac'd,
 Honour'd by him, a gentle lord and chaste,
 With dear esteem: too wise, with jealous strife
 To taint the joys of sweet, connubial life. 546
 Sole with Telemachus her service ends,
 A child she nurs'd him, and a man attends.)
 Whilst to his couch the prince himself addrest,
 The duteous dame receiv'd the purple vest: 550
 The purple vest with decent care dispos'd,
 The silver ring she pull'd, the door reclos'd;
 The bolt, obedient to the filken cord,
 To the strong staple's inmost depth restor'd,
 Secur'd the valves. There wrapt in silent shade, 555
 Pensive, the rules the Goddess gave, he weigh'd;
 Stretch'd on the downy fleece, no rest he knows,
 And in his raptur'd soul the vision glows.

Having now gone through the first book, I shall only observe to the reader, that the whole of it does not take up the compass of an entire day: when Minerva appears to Telemachus, the suitors were preparing to sit down to the banquet at noon; and the business of the first book concludes with the day. It is true, that the Gods hold a debate before the descent of Minerva, and some small time must be allowed for that transaction. It is remarkable, that there is not one simile in this book, except we allow those three words to be one, *ὅς τις δ' ὡς ἀνόπαια*; the same observation is true of the first book of the Iliad. See the notes on that place.

THE
SECOND BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

E 3

THE
A R G U M E N T.

The Council of Ithaca.

TELEMACHUS, in the assembly of the lords of Ithaca, complains of the injustice done him by the suitors, and insists upon their departure from his palace; appealing to the princes, and exciting the people to declare against them. The suitors endeavour to justify their stay, at least till he shall send the queen to the court of Icarius her father; which he refuses. There appears a prodigy of two eagles in the sky, which an Augur expounds to the ruin of the suitors. Telemachus then demands a vessel to carry him to Pylos and Sparta, there to enquire of his father's fortunes. Pallas in the shape of Mentor (an ancient friend of Ulysses) helps him to a ship, assists him in preparing necessaries for the voyage, and embarks with him that night; which concludes the second day from the opening of the poem.

The Scene continues in the palace of Ulysses in Ithaca.

THE
SECOND BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

NOW red'ning from the dawn, the morning-ray
Glow'd in the front of heav'n, and gave the
day.

The youthful hero, with returning light,
Rose anxious from th' inquietudes of night.

* This book opens with the first appearance of Telemachus upon the stage of action. And Bossu observes the great judgment of the poet, in beginning with the transactions of Ithaca in the absence of Ulysses: by this method he sets the conduct of Telemachus, Penelope, and the suitors, in a strong point of light; they all have a large share in the story of the poem, and consequently ought to have distinguishing characters. It is as necessary in Epick Poetry, as it is on the Theatre, to let us immediately into the character of every person whom the poet introduces: this adds perspicuity to the story, and we immediately grow acquainted with each personage, and interest ourselves in the good or ill fortune that attends them through the whole relation.

Telemachus is now about twenty years of age: in the eleventh book, the poet tells us, he was an infant in the arms

A royal robe he wore with graceful pride, 5
 A two-edg'd falchion threaten'd by his side,
 Embroider'd sandals glitter'd as he trod,
 And forth he mov'd, majestick as a God.
 Then by his heralds, restless of delay,
 To council calls the peers: the peers obey. 10
 Soon as in solemn form th' assembly sat,
 From his high dome himself descends in state.
 Bright in his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd;
 Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind;

of his mother when Ulysses sail'd to Troy; that hero was absent near twenty years, and from hence we may gather the exact age of Telemachus. He is every where described as a person of piety to the Gods, of duty to his parents, and as a lover of his country: he is prudent, temperate, and valiant: and the poet well sets off the importance of this young hero, by giving him the Goddess of war and wisdom for his constant attendant.

v. 13. — — *In his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd.*] The poet describes Telemachus as if he were marching against an enemy, or going to a council of war, rather than to an assembly of peers in his own country: two reasons are assigned for this conduct; either this was the common usage of princes in those times, or Telemachus might look upon the suitors as enemies, and consequently go to council in arms as against enemies. *Eustathius.*

v. 14. *Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind.*] This passage has not escaped the raillery of the critics; they look upon it as a mean description of a hero and a prince, to give him a brace of dogs only for his guards or attendants: but such was the simplicity of ancient princes, that except in war they had rarely any attendants or equipage.

Book II. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 57

Pallas with grace divine his form improves, 15

And gazing crouds admire him as he moves.

His father's throne he fill'd : while distant stood
The hoary peers, and aged wisdom bow'd.

'Twas silence all, at last Ægyptius spoke ;
Ægyptius, by his age and sorrows broke : 20
A length of days his soul with prudence crown'd,
A length of days had bent him to the ground.
His eldest * hope in arms to Ilion came,
By great Ulysses taught the path to fame ;

And we may be confident Homer copies after the custom of the time, unless we can be so absurd as to suppose, he would feign low circumstances unnecessarily, through a want of judgment.

Virgil judged otherwise, and thought this circumstance worthy of his imitation.

“ Quin etiam gemini custodes limine ab alto

“ Procedunt, gressumque canes comitantur Herilem”

Patroclus is described in the Iliad with the same attendants.

— — nine large dogs domestick at his board. B. xxiii.

Poetry, observes Dacier, is like painting, which draws the greatest beauties from the simplest customs : and even in history, we receive a sensible pleasure from the least circumstance that denotes the custom of ancient times. It may be added, that the poet, as well as the painter, is obliged to follow the customs of the age of which he writes, or paints : a modern dress would ill become Achilles or Ulysses ; such a conduct would be condemned as an absurdity in painting, and ought to be so in poetry.

* Antiphus.

But (hapless youth) the hideous Cyclops tore 25
 His quiv'ring limbs, and quaff'd his spouting gore.
 Three fons remain'd : to climb with haughty fires
 The royal bed, Eurynomus aspires ;
 The rest with duteous love his griefs assuage,
 And ease the fire of half the cares of age. 30
 Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns,
 And as he stood, he spoke and wept by turns.

Since great Ulysses fought the Phrygian plains,
 Within these walls inglorious silence reigns.

v. 31. *Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns.*] Homer, says Eustathius, inserts these particularities concerning the family of Ægyptius, to give an air of truth to his story : it does not appear that Ægyptius knew the certainty of the death of Antiphus : (for it is the poet who relates it, and not the father ;) whence, as Dacier observes, should he learn it ? He only laments him, according to the prevailing opinion that all the companions of Ulysses were lost with Ulysses.

v. 33. *Since great Ulysses, &c.*] We here are told, that there never had been any council convened in Ithaca, since the departure of Ulysses. The general design and moral of the *Odyssey*, is to inform us of the mischievous effects which the absence of a king and father of a family produces : we deprive, as Bossu observes, the poem of its very soul, and spoil the fable, if we retrench from it the disorders which the suitors create in the absence of Ulysses, both in his family and dominions. Nothing can give us a greater image of those disorders, than what is here related : what must a kingdom suffer in twenty years without a ruler, without a council to make laws or punish enormities ? Such is the condition of Ithaca : Laertes is su-

Book II. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 59

Say then, ye peers! by whose commands we meet!
Why here once more in solemn council sit? 36
Ye young, ye old, the weighty cause disclose:
Arrives some message of invading foes?
Or say, does high necessity of state
Inspire some patriot, and demand debate! 40
The present synod speaks its author wise;
Assist him, Jove, thou regent of the skies!
He spoke. Telemachus with transport glows,
Embrac'd the omen, and majestick rose:
(His royal hand th' imperial scepter sway'd) 45
Then thus, addressing to Ægyptius, said.
Rev'rend old man! lo here confess he stands
By whom ye meet; my grief your care demands.
No story I unfold of publick woes,
Nor bear advices of impending foes: 50

perannuated; Penelope oppressed by the violence of the suitors; and Telemachus to this time, in his minority.

It is very artful in the poet to open the assembly by Ægyptius: Telemachus was the person who convened it: and being the greatest personage present, it might be expected that he should open the design of it: but to give Telemachus courage, who was young and inexperienced, Ægyptius first rises, and by praising the person who had summoned them (of whom he seems ignorant) gives Telemachus to understand he has friends among the assembly: this he could no other way so safely have done, considering the power of the suitors. By this means Telemachus is encouraged to speak boldly, and arraign the disorders of the suitors with the utmost freedom.

60 HOMER's ODYSSEY. Book II.

Peace the blest land, and joys incessant crown ;
 Of all this happy realm, I grieve alone.
 For my lost fire continual sorrows spring,
 The great, the good ; your father, and your king.
 Yet more ; our house from its foundation bows, 55
 Our foes are pow'rful, and your sons the foes :
 Hither, unwelcome to the queen they come ;
 Why seek they not the rich Icarian dome ?

v. 54. *Your father, and your king.*] Telemachus here sets the character of Ulysses, as a king, in the most agreeable point of light : he ruled his people with the same mildness as a father rules his children. This must needs have a very happy effect upon the audience ; not only as it shews Ulysses to have been a good governor ; but as it recalls the memory of the happiness they received from that mild government, and obliquely condemns them of ingratitude who had forgot it. By this method also the poet interests us deeply in the sufferings of Ulysses ; we cannot see a good man and good king in distress, without the most tender emotions.

v. 55. *Yet more ; our house, &c.*] What Telemachus here says, has given offence to the criticks ; they think it indecent for a son to say, that he bears with more regret the disorder of his family than the loss of his father ; yet this objection will vanish, if we weigh Penelope, Telemachus, and his whole posterity, against the single person of Ulysses.

But what chiefly takes away this objection is, that Telemachus was still in hopes of his father's return : for ἀπώλεσα does not imply necessarily his death, but absence : and then both with justice and decency, Telemachus may say that he grieves more for the destruction of his family, than for the absence of Ulysses.

If she must wed, from other hands require
 The dow'ry : is Telemachus her fire? 60
 Yet thro' my court the noise of revel rings,
 And wastes the wise frugality of kings.
 Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice ;
 Scarce all my wine their midnight hours supplies.
 Safe in my youth, in riot still they grow, 65
 Nor in the helpless orphan dread a foe.

v. 63. *Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice.*] This passage is ridiculed by the criticks; they set it in a wrong light, and then grow very pleasant upon it : Telemachus makes a sad outcry because the suitors eat his sheep, his beeves, and fatted goats : and at last falls into tears. The truth is, the riches of kings and princes, in those early ages, consisted chiefly in flocks and cattle ; thus Æneas and Paris are described as tending their flocks, &c. and Abraham in the scriptures, as abounding in this kind of wealth.

These criticks would form a different idea of the state and condition of Telemachus, if they considered that he had been capable to maintain no fewer than an hundred and eight persons in a manner very expensive for many years ; for so many (with their attendants) were the suitors, as appears from the sixteenth book, and at the same time he kept up the dignity of his own court, and lived with great hospitality.

But it is a sufficient answer to the objections against this passage, to observe, that it is not the expence, but manner of it, that Telemachus laments : this he expressly declares by the word *μαψιδως* ; and surely a sober man may complain against luxury, without being arraigned of meanness ; and against profusion, without being condemned for parsimony.

But come it will, the time when manhood grants
 More pow'rful advocates than vain complaints.
 Approach that hour! unsufferable wrong
 Cries to the Gods, and vengeance sleeps too long.
 Rise then, ye peers! with virtuous anger rise; 71
 Your fame revere, but most th' avenging skies.
 By all the deathless pow'rs that reign above,
 By righteous Themis and by thund'ring Jove,
 (Themis, who gives to councils, or denies 75
 Success; and humbles, or confirms the wife)
 Rise in my aid! suffice the tears that flow
 For my lost fire, nor add new woe to woe.

v. 75. *Themis, who gives to councils, or denies
 Success;—*]

Eustathius observes, that there was a custom to carry the statue of Themis to the assemblies in former ages, and carry it back again when those assemblies were dissolved; and thus Themis may be said to form, and dissolve an assembly. Dacier dislikes this assertion, as having no foundation in antiquity; she thinks that the assertion of Telemachus is general, that he intimates, it is justice alone that establishes the councils of mankind, and that injustice confounds and brings the wicked designs of men to confusion.

I have followed this interpretation, not only as it suits best with the usual morality of Homer, but also as Jupiter is mentioned with Themis; and no such custom is pretended concerning his statue. He is expressly stiled by the ancients Ζεὺς ἀγοραῖος. In Sicily there was an altar of Ζεὺς ἀγοραῖος, or of Jupiter *who presides over councils*. Eustathius from Herodotus.

Book II. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 63

If e'er he bore the sword to strengthen ill,
Or having pow'r to wrong, betray'd the will, 80
On me, on me your kindled wrath affwage,
And bid the voice of lawless riot rage.
If ruin to our royal race ye doom,
Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.
Then might we hope redress from juster laws, 85
And raise all Ithaca to aid our cause :
But while your Sons commit th' unpunish'd wrong,
You make the arm of violence too strong.

While thus he spoke, with rage and grief he
frown'd,
And dash'd th' imperial scepter to the ground. 90
The big round tear hung trembling in his eye :
The synod griev'd, and gave a pitying sigh,

v. 84. *Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.*] To understand this passage, we must remember, as Eustathius remarks, that Telemachus is pleading his cause before the Ithacensians ; then he constitutes the judges of his cause : he therefore prevents an answer which they might make, viz. *We are not the men that are guilty of these outrages* ; Telemachus rejoins, " It were better for me to " suffer from your hands ; for by your quiescence you " make my affairs desperate ;" an intimation that they should rise in his defence.

v. 91. *The big round tear hung trembling in his eye.*] This passage is not one of those, where the poet can be blamed for causing a hero to weep. If we consider the youth of Telemachus, together with the tenderness agreeable to that time of life ; the subjects that demand his concern ; the apprehension of the loss of a father ; and the desolate state

Then silent sat — at length Antinous burns
With haughty rage, and sternly thus returns.

O insolence of youth ! whose tongue affords 95
Such railing eloquence, and war of words.
Studious thy country's worthies to defame,
Thy erring voice displays thy mother's shame.
Elusive of the bridal day, she gives
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives. 100

of his mother and kingdom : all these make his readiness to burst into tears an argument, not of any want of spirit in him, but of true sense, and goodness of nature ; and is a great propriety, which shews the right judgment of the poet.

v. 95. *O insolence of youth ! &c.*] We find Antinous always setting himself in the strongest opposition to Telemachus ; and therefore he is the first that falls by the spear of Ulysses ; the poet observes justice, and as Antinous is the first in guilt, he is the first in punishment. What Antinous says in this speech, concerning the treachery of the female servant of Penelope, prepares the way for the punishment Ulysses inflicts on some of the maids in the conclusion of the poem : this is an act of poetical justice ; and it is as necessary in epick as in tragick poetry, to reward the just, and punish the guilty. *Eustathius.*

v. 99. *Elusive of the bridal day, she gives*

Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.]

It will be necessary to vindicate the character of Penelope, the heroine of the poem, from the aspersions of Antinous. It must be confessed that she has a very hard game to play, she neither dares consent, nor deny ; if she consents, she injures Ulysses, whom she still expects to return ; if she denies, she endangers the throne, and the life of Telemachus, from the violence of the suitors ; so that no other method is left to elude their addresses.

Did not the sun, thro' heav'n's wide azure roll'd,
For three long years the royal fraud behold ?
While she, laborious in delusion spread
The spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread :
Where as to life the wond'rous figures rise, 105
Thus spoke th'inventive queen, with artful sighs.

“ Tho' cold in death Ulysses breathes no more,
“ Cease yet a while to urge the bridal hour ;
“ Cease, 'till to great Laërtes I bequeath
“ A task of grief, his ornaments of death. 110

I must not conceal what Eustathius has mentioned from some authors, as Lycophron, &c. who say that Penelope was *νασσαγίδα*, in plain English, *an harlot* : and he quotes Herodotus, as affirming that she had a son, named Pan, by Hermes ; but the bishop declares it is all a scandal ; and every body must conclude the same, from her conduct, as described in Homer.

To vindicate her in this place, we must consider who it is that speaks : Antinous, an unsuccessful lover : and what he blames as a crime, is really her glory ; he blames her because she does not comply with their desires ; and it had been an act of guilt to have complied. He himself sufficiently vindicates her in the conclusion of his speech, where he extols her above all the race of womankind : so that the seeming inconsistency of Penelope must be imputed to the necessity of her affairs : she is artful, but not criminal.

The original says, she deceived the suitors by her messages ; a plain intimation, that she used no extraordinary familiarities with her admirers ; and through the whole course of the poem she seldom appears in their assemblies.

v. 109. *Cease, 'till to great Laërtes I bequeath
A task of grief, his ornaments of death.]*

It was an ancient custom to dedicate the finest pieces of
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" Left when the Fates his royal ashes claim,
 " The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame ;
 " When he, whom living mighty realms obey'd,
 " Shall want in death a shroud to grace his shade."

Thus she : at once the gen'roustrain complies, 115
 Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.

The work she ply'd ; but studious of delay,
 By night revers'd the labours of the day.
 While thrice the sun his annual journey made,
 The conscious lamp the midnight fraud survey'd ;
 Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail ; 121
 The fourth, her maid unfolds th' amazing tale.

We saw, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,
 The backward labours of her faithless hand.
 Then urg'd, she perfects her illustrious toils ; 125
 A wond'rous monument of female wiles !

But you, oh peers ! and thou, oh prince ! give ear
 (I speak aloud, that every Greek may hear)

weaving and embroidery, to honour the funerals of the
 dead : and these were usually wrought by the nearest re-
 lations in their life-time. Thus in the twenty-second
 Iliad, Andromache laments, that the body of Hector must
 be exposed to the air, without those ornaments.

— — — ἀτάρ τοι εἴματα' ἐνὶ μεγάροισι κέονται,
 λεπτὰ τε ἔχ' χαρίεντα, τέλει μέγα χερσὶ γυναικῶν.

And the mother of Euryalus in Virgil, to her son.

" — — — Nec te tua funera mater
 " Produxi, pressive oculos, aut vulnera lavi,
 " Veste tegens, tibi quam noctes festina diesque
 " Urgebam, & tela curas solabar aniles."

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Dismiss the queen ; and if her sire approves,
 Let him espouse her to the peer she loves : 130
 Bid instant to prepare the bridal train,
 Nor let a race of princes wait in vain.

Tho' with a grace divine her soul is blest,
 And all Minerva breathes within her breast, 135
 In wond'rous arts than woman more renown'd,
 And more than woman with deep wisdom crown'd ;
 Tho' Tyro nor Mycene match her name,
 Nor great Alcmena (the proud boasts of Fame)
 Yet thus by heav'n adorn'd, by heav'n's decree
 She shines with fatal excellence, to thee : 140

With thee, the bowl we drain, indulge the feast,
 'Till righteous heav'n reclaim her stubborn breast.
 What tho' from pole to pole resounds her name !
 The son's destruction waits the mother's fame :
 For 'till she leaves thy court, it is decreed, 145
 Thy bowl to empty, and thy flock to bleed.

While yet he speaks, Telemachus replies.
 Ev'n nature starts, and what ye ask denies.

v. 140. *She shines with fatal excellence to thee.*] Eustathius observes, that Antinous, in the opening of his speech, throws the fault upon Penelope, to engage the favour of the multitude : but being conscious that he had said things which Penelope would resent, he extols her in the conclusion of it. He ascribes an obstinacy of virtue to her, and by this double conduct endeavours to make both Penelope and the multitude his friends.

v. 147. *Telemachus's reply*]. Telemachus every where speaks with an openness and bravery of spirit ; this speech

Thus, shall I thus repay a mother's cares,
Who gave me life, and nurs'd my infant years?

is a testimony of it, as well as his former; he answers chiefly to the dismissal of Penelope, says it would be an offence against heaven and earth; and concludes with a vehemence of expression, and tells Antinous that such a word, *μῦθον*, shall never fall from his tongue.

The criticks have found fault with one part of the speech, as betraying a spirit of avarice and meanness in Telemachus.

How to Icarius, in the bridal hour,
Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?

They think it unworthy of Telemachus to make the dower of Penelope an argument against her dismissal, and consequently ascribe his detention of her, not to duty, but to covetousness. To take away this objection, they point the verses in a different manner, and place a stop after *ἀποτίνειν*, and then the sense runs thus; "I cannot consent to dismiss her who bore me, and nursed me in my infancy, while her husband is absent, or perhaps dead; besides, hard would be the punishment I should suffer, if I should voluntarily send away Penelope to Icarius."

Dacier dislikes this solution, and appeals to the customs of those ages, to justify her opinion: if a son forced away his mother from his house, he was obliged to restore her dower, and all she brought in marriage to her husband: but if she retired voluntarily to engage in a second marriage, the dower remained with the son as lawful heir. This opinion of Dacier may be confirmed from Demosthenes in his orations, *ἔπειτα ταῦτα, ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς τελευτήσαντος, ἀπολιπῶσα τὸν οἶκον, ἢ κομισαμένη τὴν προίκα*. *Afterwards upon the decease of her husband, leaving his family, and receiving back her portion, &c.* The same author adds, that the rea-

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While sad on foreign shores Ulysses treads, 151
 Or glides a ghost with unapparent shades ;
 How to Icarius in the bridal hour
 Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r ?
 How from my father should I vengeance dread ?
 How would my mother curse my hated head ? 156

son why the suitors are so urgent to send away Penelope, is, that she may chuse to marry some one of them, rather than return to Icarius ; so that Telemachus only takes hold of their argument for her dismissal, in order to detain her. They addressed Penelope more for the sake of her riches than her beauty, (for she must be about forty years old) and he tells them, that if he sends her away against her consent, he must restore those riches, which they covet more than the person of Penelope. This I confess is very refined ; and perhaps it may be sufficient to take off the objection of covetousness in Telemachus, to understand no more than what the words at the first view seem to imply, viz. an abhorrence of their riots, described by Telemachus to have arisen to such a degree as to have almost ruined his kingdom, and made their demands impossible. I see nothing unnatural or mean in this interpretation, especially if we remember that the prodigious disorders of his family enter into the essence of the poem. The greater the disorders are, the greater are the sufferings of Ulysses.

v. 155. *How from my father should I vengeance dread ?*]
 There is an ambiguity in the word *Father* ; it may either signify Icarius or Ulysses, as Eustathius observes ; but I think the context determines the person of Ulysses ; for Telemachus believes him to be yet living, and consequently might fear his vengeance, if he offered any indignity to Penelope.

And while in wrath to vengeful fiends she cries,
 How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise?
 Abhorr'd by all, accurs'd my name would grow,
 The earth's disgrace, and humankind my foe. 160
 If this displease, why urge ye here your stay?
 Haste from the court, ye spoilers, haste away:
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse.

v. 157. *And while in wrath to vengeful fiends she cries,
 How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise?]*

In the ninth Iliad we are told that the father of Phoenix imprecated the Furies against his son.

My fire with curses loads my hated head,
 And cries, "Ye Furies! barren be his bed."
 Infernal Jove, the vengeful fiends below,
 And ruthless Proserpine, confirm'd his vow.

In the same book the Furies hear the curses of Althea upon her son,

She beat the ground, and call'd the pow'rs beneath,
 On her own son to wreak her brother's death.
 Hell heard her curses from the realms profound,
 And the fell fiends who walk the nightly round.

These passages shew the opinion the ancients had of the honour due from children to parents, to be such, that they believed there were Furies particularly commissioned to punish those who failed in that respect, and to fulfil the imprecations made against them by their offended parents. There is a greatness in this idea, and it must have had an effect upon the obedience of the youth. We see Telemachus is full of the sense of it. *Dacier.*

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But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed 165
For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed ;
Judge and assert my right, impartial Jove !
By him, and all th' immortal host above,
(A sacred oath) if heav'n the pow'r supply,
Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die. 170

With that, two eagles from a mountain's height
By Jove's command direct their rapid flight ;
Swift they descend, with wing to wing conjoin'd,
Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind.

v. 171, &c. *The prodigy of two eagles.*] This prodigy is ushered in very magnificently, and the verses are lofty and sonorous. The eagles are Ulysses and Telemachus : *By Jove's command they fly from a mountain's height* : this denotes that the two heroes are inspired by Jupiter, and come from the country to the destruction of the suitors : the eagles fly *with wing to wing conjoin'd* ; this shews, that they act in concert and unity of councils : at first they *float upon the wind* ; this implies the calmness and secrecy of the approach of those heroes ; at last they *clang their wings, and hovering beat the skies* ; this shews the violence of the assault : *With ardent eyes the rival train they threat*. This, as the poet himself interprets it, denotes the approaching fate of the suitors. *Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs they fly, Full tow'rd the east* ; this signifies that the suitors alone are not doomed to destruction, but that the men of Ithaca are involved in danger, as Halitherfes interprets it.

Nor to the great alone is death decreed ;
We, and our guilty Ithaca must bleed.

See here the natural explication of this prodigy, which is very ingenious ! *Eustathius, verbatim.*

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Above th' assembled peers they wheel on high, 175
 And clang their wings, and hov'ring beat the sky;
 With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,
 And shrieking loud, denounce approaching fate.
 They cuff, they tear; their cheeks and neck they
 rend,

And from their plumes huge drops of blood de-
 scend; 180

Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs, they fly
 Full tow'rd the east, and mount into the sky.

The wond'ring rivals gaze with cares oppressed,
 And chilling horrors freeze in ev'ry breast.
 'Till big with knowledge of approaching woes 185

The prince of augurs, Halitherses, rose:
 Prescient he view'd th' aerial tracks, and drew
 A sure presage from ev'ry wing that flew.

Ye sons (he cry'd) of Ithaca, give ear,
 Hear all! but chiefly you, oh rivals! hear. 190
 Destruction sure o'er all your heads impends;
 Ulysses comes, and death his steps attends.
 Nor to the great alone is death decreed;
 We, and our guilty Ithaca must bleed. 194

Why cease we then the wrath of heav'n to stay?
 Be humbled all, and lead, ye great! the way.
 For lo! my words no fancy'd woes relate:
 I speak from science, and the voice is fate.

When great Ulysses fought the Phrygian shores
 To shake with war proud Ilion's lofty tow'rs, 200

Deeds then undone my faithful tongue foretold :
Heav'n seal'd my words, and you those deeds behold.

I see (I cry'd) his woes, a countless train ;
I see his friends o'erwhelm'd beneath the main ;
Howtwiceten years from shore to shore he roams ; 205
Now twice ten years are past, and now he comes !

To whom Eurymachus — Fly, dotard, fly !
With thy wise dreams, and fables of the sky.
Go prophecy at home ; thy sons advise :
Here thou art sage in vain — I better read the
skies. 210

Unnumber'd birds glide thro' th' ærial way,
Vagrants of air, and unforeboding stray.
Cold in the tomb, or in the deeps below
Ulysses lies : oh wert thou laid as low !

v. 203. *I see (I cry'd) his woes ———*

I see his friends o'erwhelm'd, &c.]

In three lines (observes Eustathius) the poet gives us the whole *Odyssey* in miniature : and it is wonderful to think, that so plain a subject should produce such variety in the process of it. Aristotle observes the simplicity of Homer's platform ; which is no more than this : a prince is absent from his country ; Neptune destroys his companions ; in his absence his family is disordered by many princes that address his wife, and plot against the life of his only son ; but at last after many storms he returns, punishes the suitors, and re-establishes his affairs : this is all that is essential to the poem, the rest of it is made up of episodes. And yet with what miracles of poetry (*speciosa miracula*, as Horace styles them) has he furnished out his poem ?

Then would that busy head no broils suggest, 215
Nor fire to rage Telemachus's breast.
From him some bribe thy venal tongue requires,
And int'rest, not the God, thy voice inspires.
His guideless youth, if thy experienc'd age
Mislead fallacious into idle rage, 220
Vengeance deserv'd thy malice shall repress,
And but augment the wrongs thou would'st redress.
Telemachus may bid the queen repair
To great Icarius, whose paternal care
Will guide her passion, and reward her choice, 225
With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.
Till she retires, determin'd we remain,
And both the prince and augur threat in vain :
His pride of words, and thy wild dream of fate,
Move not the brave, or only move their hate. 230
Threat on, oh prince ! elude the bridal day,
Threat on, 'till all thy stores in waste decay.

v. 207. *The speech of Eurymachus.*] It has been observed, that Homer is the father of oratory as well as poetry, and it must be confessed, that there is not any one branch of it, that is not to be found in his poetry. The invective, persuasive, ironical, &c. may all be gathered from it. Nothing can be better adapted to the purpose than this speech of Eurymachus : he is to decry the credit of the predictions of Halitherses : he derides, he threatens, and describes him as a venal prophet. He is speaking to the multitude, and endeavours to bring Halitherses into contempt, and in order to it he uses him contemptuously.

True, Greece affords a train of lovely dames,
 In wealth and beauty worthy of our flames :
 But never from this nobler fuit we cease ; 235
 For wealth and beauty less than virtue please.

To whom the youth. Since then in vain I tell
 My num'rous woes, in silence let them dwell.
 But heav'n, and all the Greeks, have heard my
 wrongs :

To heav'n, and all the Greeks, redress belongs. 240
 Yet this I ask, (nor be it ask'd in vain)
 A bark to waft me o'er the rolling main ;
 The realms of Pyle and Sparta to explore,
 And seek my royal fire from shore to shore :
 If, or to fame his doubtful fate be known, 245
 Or to be learn'd from oracles alone ?

v. 239. *All the Greeks have heard my wrongs.*] It is necessary for the reader to carry in his mind, that this assembly consists not only of the peers, but of the people of Ithaca : for to the people Telemachus here appeals.

It is evident, that the place of the assembly was at least open to the air in the upper parts : for otherways how should the eagles be visible to the suitors ? and so very plainly, as to be discovered to threat them with their eyes ? There was no doubt a place set apart for council, usually in the market : for Telemachus is said to seat himself in his father's throne, in the beginning of this book : but Ulysses had been absent twenty years : and therefore it is evident that his throne had stood in the same place for the space of twenty years. It is past contradiction, that in Athens, and other cities of Greece, there were Βουλευτήρια, publick halls for the consultation of affairs.

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If yet he lives ; with patience I forbear,
 'Till the fleet Hours restore the circling year :
 But if already wand'ring in the train
 Of empty shades ; I measure back the main, 250
 Plant the fair column o'er the mighty dead,
 And yield his comfort to the nuptial bed.

He ceas'd ; and while abash'd the peers attend,
 Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend :
 [When fierce in arms he fought the scenes of
 war, 255

“ My friend (he cry'd) my palace be thy care ;
 “ Years roll'd on years my god-like fire decay,
 “ Guard thou his age, and his behests obey.”]
 Stern as he rose, he cast his eyes around,
 That flash'd with rage ; and as he spoke, he
 frown'd. 260

v. 254. *Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend.*] The name of Mentor is another instance of the gratitude of our poet's temper, it being the same which belonged to a friend of his by whom he was entertained in Ithaca, during a de fluxion on his eyes, which seized him in his voyages ; and at whose house he is said to have laid the plan of this poem. This character of Mentor is well sustained by his speech, and by the assistance he gratefully gives to young Telemachus on all occasions.

v. 258. *Guard thou my fire, and his behests obey.*] The original says only, “ Obey the old man.” Eustathius rightly determines, that the expression means Laertes. The poet loses no opportunity of giving Ulysses an excellent cha-

O never, never more ! let king be just,
 Be mild in pow'r, or faithful to his trust !
 Let tyrants govern with an iron rod,
 Oppress, destroy, and be the scourge of God ;
 Since he who like a father held his reign, 265
 So soon forgot, was just and mild in vain !
 True, while my friend is griev'd, his griefs I share ;
 Yet now the rivals are my smallest care :
 They, for the mighty mischiefs they devise,
 E'er long shall pay—their forfeit lives the price. 270
 But against you, ye Greeks ! ye coward train,
 Gods ! how my soul is mov'd with just disdain ?
 Dumb ye all stand, and not one tongue affords
 His injur'd prince the little aid of words.

While yet he spoke, Leocritus rejoin'd : 275
 O pride of words, and arrogance of mind !
 Would'st thou to rise in arms the Greeks advise ?
 Join all your powr's ! in arms, ye Greeks arise !
 Yet would your powr's in vain our strength oppose ;
 The valiant few o'ermatch an host of foes. 280

racter ; this is as necessary as continually to repeat the disorders of the suitors.

— — — “ *Servetur ad imum*

“ *Qualis ab incœpto processerit, & sibi constet.*”

This conduct contributes admirably to the design of the poem ; and when the poet in the unravelling of his fable comes to reward and punish the chief actors, we acknowledge his justice in the death of the suitors, and re-establishment of Ulysses.

Should great Ulysses stern appear in arms,
 While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms ;
 Tho' to his breast his spouse with transport flies,
 Torn from her breast, that hour, Ulysses dies.
 But hence retreating to your domes repair ; 285
 To arm the vessel, Mentor ! be thy care,
 And Halitherses ! thine : be each his friend ;
 Ye lov'd the father : go, the son attend.

v. 282. *While the bowl circles and the banquet warms.*] The original is not without obscurity : it says, *περὶ Δαίτι* : or, *in the time of the banquet*. Eustathius interprets, *τῷ οἶνῳ ἑκαλινγύν- ται αὐτοῖς*, *The wine as it were fighting on their side* ; and this agrees with what follows.

The design of this speech is to deter the people of Ithaca from rising in the cause of Ulysses : Mentor speaks justly ; Leocritus insolently ; Mentor sets before them the worth of Ulysses ; Leocritus the power of the suitors : Mentor speaks like a brave man ; Leocritus (observes Eustathius) like a coward, who wanting true courage, flies to the assistance of wine to raise a false one.

Perhaps it may be objected, that there is not a sufficient distinction in the characters of the several suitors ; they are all described as insolent voluptuaries. But though they agree in this general character, yet there is something distinguishing in the particular persons : thus Antinous derides, Eurymachus covers villainy with mildness ; Antinous is ever the foremost in outrage, Eurymachus generally his second : a greater distinction is neither necessary, nor possible to be represented. What the poet is to describe, is the insolence of the suitors, and the disorders they create in his family and kingdom ; he is obliged to dwell upon these circumstances, because they are essential to his design : and consequently that general resemblance of their characters is not a fault in the poet.

But yet, I trust, the boaster means to stay
Safe in the court, nor tempt the wat'ry way. 290

Then, with a rushing sound, th' assembly bend,
Diverse their steps: the rival rout ascend
The royal dome; while sad the prince explores
The neighb'ring main, and forrowing treads the
shores.

There, as the waters o'er his hands he shed, 295
The royal suppliant to Minerva pray'd.

O Goddess! who descending from the skies
Vouchsaf'd thy presence to my wond'ring eyes,
By whose commands the raging deeps I trace,
And seek my fire thro' storms and rolling seas! 300
Hear from thy heav'ns above, oh warrior-maid!
Descend once more, propitious to my aid.
Without thy presence, vain is thy command;
Greece, and the rival train, thy voice withstand.

v. 291. *Then, with a rushing sound, &c.*] The assembly which was convened by Telemachus, is broke up in a riotous manner by Leocritus, who had no right to dissolve it. This agrees with the lawless state of the country in the absence of its king, and shews (says Eustathius) that the suitors had usurped the chief authority.

There is a fine contrast between the behaviour of Telemachus and that of the suitors. They return to repeat their disorders and debauches; Telemachus retires to supplicate the Goddess of wisdom, to assist him in his enterprises. Thus the poet raises the character of Telemachus; he has shewed him to be a youth of a brave spirit, a good speaker, and here represents him as a person of piety.

Indulgent to his pray'r the Goddess took 305
Sage Mentor's form, and thus like Mentor spoke.

O prince, in early youth divinely wife,
Born, the Ulysses of thy age to rise!
If to the son the father's worth descends,
O'er the wide waves success thy ways attends: 310
To tread the walks of death he stood prepar'd,
And what he greatly thought, he nobly dar'd.
Were not wise sons descendent of the wise,
And did not heroes from brave heroes rise;
Vain were my hopes: few sons attain the praise 315
Of their great fires, and most their fires disgrace.
But since thy veins paternal virtue fires,
And all Penelope thy soul inspires:
Go, and succeed! the rivals arms despise;
For never, never, wicked man was wise. 320
Blind they rejoice, tho' now, even now they fall;
Death hastes amain: one hour o'erwhelms them
all!

And lo, with speed we plough the wat'ry way;
My pow'r shall guard thee, and my hand convey:
The winged vessel studious I prepare, 325
Thro' seas and realms companion of thy care.

v. 307. *The speech of Minerva.*] This speech of Minerva is suited to encourage a young man to imitate the virtue of his father, and not to suffer himself to be overcome by any appearance of difficulties. She sets his father before his eyes, and tells him, there never was any danger which he durst not encounter; if he should suffer himself to be discouraged, he would prove himself an unworthy son of a brave father. *Dacier. Eustathius.*

Thou to the court ascend : and to the shores
 (When night advances) bear the naval stores ;
 Bread, that decaying man with strength supplies,
 And gen'rous wine, which thoughtful sorrow flies.
 Meanwhile the mariners by my command 331
 Shall speed aboard, a valiant chosen band.
 Wide o'er the bay, by vessel vessel rides ;
 The best I chuse to waft thee o'er the tides.

She spoke : to his high dome the prince re-
 turns, 335
 And as he moves, with royal anguish mourns.
 'Twas riot all, among the lawless train ;
 Boar bled by boar, and goat by goat lay slain.
 Arriv'd, his hand the gay Antinous prest,
 And thus deriding, with a smile addrest. 340

Grieve not, oh daring prince ! that noble heart ;
 Ill suits gay youth the stern heroick part.

v. 341. *Antinous's speech.*] This speech must be understood ironically : ἔργον τε ἐπὶ τε is used as before, and has relation to the preceding harangues of Telemachus to the people, and his intended voyage ; by way of derision Antinous bids him not trouble his brave spirit in contriving any more orations, or in any bold attempt to find out Ulysses ; or to act the orator or hero's part.

The critics have almost generally condemned these pieces of gaiety and raillery, as unworthy of heroic poetry : if ever they are proper, they must be so in the mouths of these suitors ; persons of no serious or noble characters : mirth, wine, and feasting is their constant employment ; and consequently if they fall into absurdities, they act suitably to their characters. Milton, the best and

Indulge the genial hour, unbend thy soul,
 Leave thought to age, and drain the flowing bowl.
 Studious to ease thy grief, our care provides 345
 The bark, to waft thee o'er the swelling tides.

Is this, returns the prince, for mirth a time?
 When lawless gluttons riot, mirth's a crime;
 The luscious wines, dishonour'd, lose their taste;
 The song is noise, and impious is the feast. 350

Suffice it to have spent with swift decay
 The wealth of kings, and made my youth a prey.
 But now the wise instructions of the sage,
 And manly thoughts inspir'd by manly age,
 Teach me to seek redress for all my woe, 355
 Here, or in Pyle—in Pyle, or here, your foe.

Deny your vessels, ye deny in vain;
 A private voyager I pass the main.
 Free breathe the winds, and free the billows flow,
 And where on earth I live, I live your foe. 360

He spoke and frown'd, nor longer deign'd to stay,
 Sternly his hand withdrew, and strode away.

Meantime, o'er all the dome, they quaff, they
 feast, }
 Derisive taunts were spread from guest to guest, }
 And each in jovial mood his mate address. 365 }

greatest imitator of Homer, has followed him unworthily in this respect; I mean, has debased even this low raillery into greater lowness, by playing upon words and syllables. But in this place the raillery is not without its effect, by shewing the utmost contempt of Telemachus; and surely it is the lowest degree of calamity to be at once oppressed and despised.

Tremble ye not, oh friends! and coward fly,
 Doom'd by the stern Telemachus to die?
 To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies,
 Big with revenge, the mighty warrior flies:
 Or comes from Ephyre with poisons fraught, 370
 And kills us all in one tremendous draught?

Or who can say (his gamesome mate replies)
 But while the dangers of the deeps he tries,
 He, like his fire, may sink depriv'd of breath,
 And punish us unkindly by his death? 375
 What mighty labours would he then create,
 To seize his treasures, and divide his state,
 The royal palace to the queen convey,
 Or him she blesses in the bridal day!

v. 368. *To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies.*] It is observable, says Eustathius, that the poet had in his choice several expedients to bring about the destruction of the suitors, but he rejects them, and chuses the most difficult method, out of reverence to truth, being unwilling to falsify the histories of Sparta and Pylos. This has a double effect; it furnishes the poet with a series of noble incidents; and also gives an air of probability to the story of Ulysses and Telemachus.

v. 378. *The royal palace to the queen convey.*] The suitors allot the palace to Penelope: it being, says Eustathius, the only thing that they cannot consume; and adds, that the expression of the suitors, concerning the labour they should undergo in dividing the substance of Ulysses, shews the wealth and abundance of that hero. Dacier has found out an allusion between φόνον in the first speech, and πόνον in the second; they differing only in one letter: she calls

Meantime the lofty rooms the prince surveys,
 Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race: 381
 Here ruddy brass and gold refulgent blaz'd ;
 There polish'd chests embroider'd vestures grac'd ;
 Here jars of oil breath'd forth a rich perfume ;
 There casks of wine in rows adorn'd the dome. 385

this a beauty, which she laments she cannot preserve in her translation. She is the only commentator that ever was quick-sighted enough to make the discovery. The words have no relation ; they stand at a sufficient distance ; and I believe Homer would have thought such trifling unworthy of his poetry. So that all the honour which accrues from that observation must be ascribed (in this case, as in many others) to the commentator, and not the author.

v. 381. *Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race.*] Such passages as these have ever furnished criticks with matter of raillery ; they think such household cares unworthy of a king, and that this conduct suits better with vulgar persons of less fortune. I confess, such descriptions now would be ridiculous in a poet, because unsuitable to our manners. But if we look upon such passages as pictures and exact representations of the old world, the reader will find a sensible pleasure in them.

It is a true observation, that the Iliad is chiefly suitable to the condition of kings and heroes ; and consequently filled with circumstances in which the greatest part of mankind can have no concern or interest : the Odyssey is of more general use ; the story of it is a series of calamities, which concern every man, as every man may feel them. We can bring the sufferings of Ulysses in some degree home to ourselves, and make his condition our own ; but what private person can ever be in the circumstances of Agamemnon or Achilles ? What I would infer from this is, that the reader ought not to take offence at any

Book II. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 85

(Pure flav'rous wine, by Gods in bounty giv'n,
 And worthy to exalt the feasts of heav'n.)
 Untouch'd they stood, 'till his long labours o'er,
 The great Ulysses reach'd his native shore.
 A double strength of bars secur'd the gates : 390
 Fast by the door the wife Euryclea waits ;
 Euryclea, who, great Ops! thy lineage shar'd,
 And watch'd all night, all day ; a faithful guard.
 To whom the prince. O thou, whose guardian
 care 394
 Nurs'd the most wretched king that breathes the air ;
 Untouch'd and sacred may these vessels stand,
 'Till great Ulysses views his native land.

such descriptions, which are only mean as they differ from the fashions of the latter ages. In the Iliad, Achilles, when he acts in the common offices of life, and not as an hero, is liable to the same objection. But if the manners of the ancient ages be considered, we shall be reconciled to the actions of the ancient heroes ; and consequently to Homer.

v. 394. — — — *O thou, whose guardian care
 Nurs'd the most wretched king—*]

Euryclea was not properly the nurse of Telemachus, but of Ulysses ; so that she is called so not in a strict sense, but as one concerned in his education from his infancy, and as a general appellation of honour. Telemachus here reserves the best wines for Ulysses ; a lesson (observes Eustathius) that even in the smallest matters we ought to pay a deference to our parents. These occasional and seemingly trivial circumstances are not without their use, if not as poetical ornaments, yet as moral instructions.

But by thy care twelve urns of wine be fill'd,
 Next these in worth, and firm those urns be seal'd ;
 And twice ten measures of the choicest flour 400
 Prepar'd, ere yet descends the ev'ning hour.
 For when the fav'ring shades of night arise,
 And peaceful slumbers close my mother's eyes,
 Me from our coast shall spreading sails convey,
 To seek Ulysses thro' the wat'ry way. 405

While yet he spoke, she fill'd the walls with cries,
 And tears ran trickling from her aged eyes.
 Oh whither, whither flies my son ? she cry'd,
 To realms, that rocks and roaring seas divide ?
 In foreign lands thy father's days decay'd, 410
 And foreign lands contain the mighty dead.
 The wat'ry way ill-fated if thou try,
 All, all must perish, and by fraud you die !
 Then stay, my child ! storms beat, and rolls the
 main ; 414

Oh beat those storms, and roll the seas in vain !

Far hence (reply'd the prince) thy fears be driv'n :
 Heav'n calls me forth ; these counsels are of Heav'n.
 But by the pow'rs that hate the perjurd, swear,
 To keep my voyage from the royal ear,
 Nor uncompell'd the dang'rous truth betray, 420
 'Till twice six times descends the lamp of day :

v. 421. *'Till twice six times descends the lamp of day.*] It may be demanded how it was probable, (if possible) that the departure of Telemachus could be concealed twelve days from the knowledge of so fond a mother as Penelope ? It must be allowed that this would not be possible,

Left the sad tale a mother's life impair,
And grief destroy what time a while would spare.

Thus he. The matron with uplifted eyes
Attests th' all-seeing Sov'reign of the skies. 425
Then studious she prepares the choicest flour,
The strength of wheat, and wines an ample store.
While to the rival train the prince returns,
The martial Goddess with impatience burns ;
Like thee, Telemachus, in voice and size, 430
With speed divine from street to street she flies,
She bids the mariners prepar'd, to stand,
When night descends, embody'd on the strand.

except in a time of such disorder as the suitors created : Penelope confined herself almost continually within her own apartment, and very seldom appeared publicly : so that there is no improbability in this relation. *Dacier.*

Eustathius makes a criticism upon the words ἀπομύνασι and ἐπομύνασι, the former is used negatively, the latter affirmatively ; namely, the former in swearing *not to perform* a thing, the latter *to perform it*.

v. 432. *She bids the mariners, &c.*] It is probable that this passage of Minerva preparing the mariners, &c. is thus to be understood : the men of Ithaca retaining in memory the speech of Telemachus, and believing that what he then said, and now requests, was agreeable to justice ; and having as it were his image graven upon their hearts, voluntarily resolve to lend him assistance : so that Minerva is to be taken allegorically, to imply that it was every person's own reason that induced him to assist Telemachus. *Eustathius.*

Then to Noemon swift she runs, she flies,
And asks a bark : the chief a bark supplies. 435

And now, declining with his sloping wheels,
Down sunk the sun behind the western hills.
The Goddess shov'd the vessel from the shores,
And stow'd within its womb the naval stores.
Full in the op'nings of the spacious main 440
It rides ; and now descends the sailer-train.

Next, to the court, impatient of delay,
With rapid step the Goddess urg'd her way :
There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound,
And dash'd the flowing goblet to the ground. 445

v. 435. *Noemon — the bark supplies.*] It may be asked why this particularity is necessary, and may it not be thought that such a little circumstance is insignificant? The answer is, that a great deal depends upon this particularity; no less than the discovery of the voyage of Telemachus to the suitors; and consequently, whatever the suitors act in order to intercept him, takes its rise from this little incident; the fountain is indeed small, but a large stream of poetry flows from it.

v. 444. *There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound.*] The words in the original are ἐϋδελν and ὕπνῳ, which are not to be taken for being *asleep*, but *drowsy*; this is evident from the usage of καθεϋδελν, in the conclusion of the first book of the Iliad, where the signification has been mistaken by most translators: they make Jupiter there to be asleep; though two lines afterwards, in the second book, Homer expressly says,

Th' immortals slumber'd on their thrones above:
All, but the ever-waking eyes of Jove.

Drowsy they rose, with heavy fumes oppress'd,
Reel'd from the palace, and retir'd to rest.

Then thus, in Mentor's rev'rend form array'd,
Spoke to Telemachus the martial maid.

Lo! on the seas, prepar'd the vessel stands, 450
Th' impatient mariner thy speed demands.

Swift as she spoke, with rapid pace she leads;
The footsteps of the Deity he treads.

Swift to the shore they move: along the strand
The ready vessel rides, the sailors ready stand. 455

He bids them bring their stores; th' attending
train

Load the tall bark, and launch into the main.

The Prince and Goddess to the stern ascend;

To the strong stroke at once the rowers bend.

Full from the west she bids fresh breezes blow.

The sable billows foam and roar below. 461

It may be asked how Minerva can be said to occasion this drowsiness in the suitors, and make them retire sooner than usual? Eustathius replies, that the person who furnished the wine supplied it in greater quantities than ordinary, through which wine they contracted a drowsiness: in this sense Minerva, or wisdom, may be said to assist the designs of Telemachus.

v. 460. — — — *She bids fresh breezes blow.*] This also is an allegory, and implies that the sailors had the experience and art to guide the ship before the winds; but poetry, that delights to raise every circumstance, exalts it into the marvellous, and ascribes it to the Goddess of wisdom. *Eustathius.*

Imploring all the Gods that reign above,
But chief, the blue-ey'd progeny of Jove.

water; hence came the distinction of ἔνσπονδον and ἄσπονδον, the unlawful and lawful libation; wine unmixed was lawful, the mixed unlawful. Homer in this place uses ἐπιτεφείας κρηπίδας, or *goblets crown'd with wine*; that is, filled till the wine stood above the brim of the goblet; they esteemed it an irreverence to the gods not to fill the cups full, for then they only esteemed the libation *whole and perfect*, ὅλον καὶ τέλειον.

This book takes up the space of one day and one night: it opens with the morning: the speeches in the council, with the preparations for the voyage of Telemachus, are the subject of the day; and the voyage is finished by the next morning. By this last circumstance we may learn that Ithaca was distant from Pylos but one night's voyage, nay something less, there being some time spent after the setting of the sun, in carrying the provisions from the palace to the vessel.

The book consists chiefly in the speeches of Telemachus and his friends against those of the suitors. It shews the great judgment of the poet in chusing this method: hence we see the causes preceding the effects, and know from what spring every action flowed: we are never at a loss for a reason for every incident: the speeches are as it were the ground-work upon which he builds all that relates to the adventures of Telemachus.

In the Iliad, after the dissolution of the council in the first book, and the dissension between Agamemnon and Achilles, we immediately see upon what hinge the fable turns. So in the Odyssey, after the poet has laid before us the warm debates between the suitors and Telemachus, we immediately expect them to

Thus all the night they stem the liquid way,
And end their voyage with the morning ray. 475

act as enemies: the war is declared, and we become judges as well as spectators of the scenes of action. Thus Homer adds the perspicuity of history to the ornaments of poetry.

THE
THIRD BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE
A R G U M E N T.

The Interview of Telemachus and Nestor.

TELEMACHUS, guided by Pallas in the shape of Mentor, arrives in the morning at Pylos, where Nestor and his sons are sacrificing on the sea-shore to Neptune. Telemachus declares the occasion of his coming, and Nestor relates what past in their return from Troy, how their fleets were separated, and he never since heard of Ulysses. They discourse concerning the death of Agamemnon, the revenge of Orestes, and the injuries of the suitors. Nestor advises him to go to Sparta, and inquire further of Menelaus. The sacrifice ended with the night, Minerva vanishes from them in the form of an eagle: Telemachus is lodged in the palace. The next morning they sacrifice a bullock to Minerva, and Telemachus proceeds on his journey to Sparta, attended by Pisistratus.

The scene lies on the sea-shore of Pylos.

T H E
* T H I R D B O O K
O F T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

THE sacred sun, above the waters rais'd,
Thro' heav'n's eternal, brazen portals blaz'd;
And wide o'er earth diffus'd his chearing ray,
To Gods and men to give the golden day.

* The scene is now removed from Ithaca to Pylos, and with it a new vein of poetry is opened: instead of the riots of the suitors, we are entertained with the wisdom and piety of Nestor. This and the following book are a kind of supplement to the Iliad; the nature of epick poetry requires that something should be left to the imagination of the reader, nor is the picture to be intirely drawn at full length. Homer therefore, to satisfy our curiosity, gives an account of the fortunes of those great men, who made so noble a figure at the siege of Troy. This conduct also shews his art: variety gives life and delight: and it is much more necessary in epick than in comick or tragick poetry, sometimes to shift the scenes, to diversify and embellish the story. But as on the stage the poet ought not to step at once from one part of the world to a too remote country, (for this destroys credibility, and the auditor cannot fancy himself this minute here, and the next a thousand miles distant) so in epick poetry, every removal

Now on the coast of Pyle the vessel falls, 5
 Before old Neleus' venerable walls.
 There, suppliant to the monarch of the flood,
 At nine green theatres the Pylians stood,
 Each held five hundred, (a deputed train)
 At each, nine oxen on the sand lay slain. 10

must be within the degrees of probability. We have here a very easy transition; the poet carries his hero no farther than he really might sail in the compass of time he allots for his voyage. If he had still dwelt upon the disorders of the suitors without interruption, he must grow tiresome; but he artfully breaks the thread of their story with beautiful incidents and episodes, and reserves the further recital of their disorders for the end of his poem: by this method we sit down with fresh appetite to the entertainment, and rise at last not cloyed, but satisfied.

v. 2. *Thro' heav'n's eternal, brazen portals—*] The original calls heaven πολύχαλκον, or *brazen*; the reason of it arises either from the palaces of the Gods being built of brass by Vulcan; or rather the word implies no more than the stability of heaven, which in other places is called *Κιθιρείον*, or *framed of iron*. *Eustathius*.

v. 8. *At nine green theatres.*] It may be asked why the poet is so very particular as to mention that the Pylians were divided into nine assemblies; and may it not seem a circumstance of no importance? *Eustathius* answers from the ancients, that there were nine cities subject to the power of Nestor: five in Pylos, the rest in Bœotia; the poet therefore allots one bank or theatre to every city, which consisted of five hundred men, the whole number amounting to four thousand five hundred: these cities furnished the like complement of men to Nestor for the war at Troy: he sailed in ninety vessels, and allowing fifty men to each

They taste the entrails, and the altars load
 With smoking thighs, an off'ring to the God.
 Full for the port the Ithacensians stand,
 And furl their sails, and issue on the land.
 Telemachus already prest the shore ; 15
 Not first, the pow'r of wisdom march'd before,
 And ere the sacrificing throng he join'd,
 Admonish'd thus his well attending mind.

Proceed, my son ! this youthful shame expel ;
 An honest business never blush to tell. 20

vessel, they amount to that number. Hence it appears that this was a national sacrifice, every city furnished nine bulls, and by consequence the whole nation were partakers of it.

v. 8. *The sacrifice of the Pylians.*] This was a very solemn sacrifice of the Pylians : how comes it then to pass, that Homer passes it over in one line ? Eustathius answers, that the occasion disallows a longer description, and Homer knows when to speak, and when to be silent. He chuses to carry on the adventures of Telemachus, rather than amuse himself in descriptions that contribute nothing to the story ; he finds a time of more leisure in the latter part of this book, and there he describes it at length.

v. 11. *They taste the entrails.*] That is, every person eat a small portion of the sacrifice, and by this method every person became partaker of it.

There is nothing in Homer that shews where this sacrifice was offered, whether in a temple, or in the open air. But Eustathius tells us from Strabo, that it was in the temple of Samian Neptune, ἐν ἱερῷ Σαμίου Ποσειδῶνος.

To learn what fates thy wretched fire detain,
 We past the wide, immeasurable main.
 Meet then the senior far renown'd for sense,
 With rev'rend awe, but decent confidence :
 Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies ; 25
 And sure he will : for wisdom never lies.

Oh tell me, Mentor ! tell me, faithful guide,
 (The youth with prudent modesty reply'd)
 How shall I meet, or how accost the sage,
 Unkill'd in speech, nor yet mature of age ? 30
 Awful th' approach, and hard the task appears,
 To question wisely men of riper years.

To whom the martial Goddess thus rejoind.
 Search, for some thoughts, thy own suggesting mind ;
 And others, dictated by heav'nly pow'r, 35
 Shall rise spontaneous in the needful hour.
 For nought unprosperous shall thy ways attend,
 Born with good omens, and with Heav'n thy friend.

v. 25. *Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies ;
 And sure he will : for wisdom never lies.*]

This sentiment is truly noble, and as nobly expressed : the simplicity of the diction corresponds with that of the thought. Homer in many places testifies the utmost abhorrence of a lie. This verse is twice repeated in the present book, as in some others ; and nothing can be stronger in the same view than that of Achilles in the ninth Iliad :

Who dares think one thing, and another tell,
 My heart detests him as the gates of hell.

v. 38. *Born with good omens, and with Heav'n thy friend.*]
 There is some obscurity in the Greek expression, and the

She spoke, and led the way with swiftest speed :
 As swift, the youth pursu'd the way she led ; 40
 And join'd the band before the sacred fire,
 Where sat, encompass'd with his sons, the fire.
 The youth of Pylos, some on pointed wood
 Transfix'd the fragments, some prepar'd the food.
 In friendly throngs they gather to embrace 45
 Their unknown guests, and at the banquet place.
 Pisistratus was first, to grasp their hands,
 And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands ;

ancient criticks have made it more obscure by their false interpretations ; they imagine that the poet only meant to say, that Telemachus was the legitimate son of Penelope and Ulysses. *Eustathius*.

Dacier very justly condemns this explication, as unworthy of Homer ; and gives us a more plain and natural interpretation, viz. " You were not born in despite of
 " the Gods ; that is, you are well made, and of a
 " good presence, you have good inclinations, and in a
 " word, your birth is happy." She explains *τραφέμην* after the same manner. " You were not educated in
 " despite of the Gods ;" that is, " the Gods have blessed
 " your education." This explication seems to be just, and answers perfectly the design of Minerva ; which was to give a decent assurance to Telemachus : you are a person, says the Goddess, of a good presence, and happy education, why then should you be ashamed to appear before Nestor ?

v. 48. *And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands.*] It is with great pleasure that I read such passages in an author of so great antiquity, as are pictures of the simplicity of those heroick ages : it is the remark of Eustathius, that Pisistratus the son of a king does not seat these strangers

Along the shore th' illustrious pair he led,
 Where Nestor sat with youthful Thrasymed. 50
 To each a portion of the feast he bore,
 And held a golden goblet foaming o'er ;
 Then first approaching to the elder guest,
 The latent Goddess in these words address.
 Whoe'er thou art, whom fortune brings to keep
 These rites of Neptune, monarch of the deep, 56
 The first it fits, oh stranger ! to prepare
 The due libation and the solemn pray'r :
 Then give thy friend to shed the sacred wine :
 Tho' much thy younger, and his years like mine, }
 He too, I deem, implores the Pow'rs divine : 61 }

upon purple tapestry, or any other costly furniture, but upon the skins of beasts, that had nothing to recommend them but their softness ; being spread upon the sand of the sea-shores.

This whole passage pleases me extremely ; there is a spirit of true devotion, morality, and good sense in it ; and the decency of behaviour between Nestor and Telemachus is described very happily : Nestor shews great benevolence to Telemachus ; Telemachus great reverence to Nestor : the modesty of the one, and the humanity of the other, are worthy of our observation. We see the same picture of Nestor in the *Odyssey*, that was drawn of him in the *Iliad*, with this only difference, that there he was a counsellor of war, here he is painted in softer colours, ruling his people in peace, and diffusing a spirit of piety through his whole territories. He had now survived the war of Troy almost ten years ; and the Gods reward the old age of this wise and religious prince with peace and happiness.

For all mankind a like require their grace,
All born to want ; a miserable race !

He spake, and to her hand preferr'd the bowl :
A secret pleasure touch'd Athena's soul, 65
To see the pref'rence due to sacred age
Regarded ever by the just and sage.
Of Ocean's king she then implores the grace.
Oh thou ! whose arms this ample globe embrace,
Fulfil our wish, and let thy glory shine 70
On Nestor first, and Nestor's royal line ;
Next grant the Pylian states their just desires,
Pleas'd with their hecatomb's ascending fires ;
Last deign Telemachus and me to bless,
And crown our voyage with desir'd success. 75

Thus she ; and having paid the rite divine,
Gave to Ulysses' son the rosy wine.
Suppliant he pray'd. And now the victim's drest
They draw, divide, and celebrate the feast.

v. 74. *Last deign Telemachus and me to bless*—] Since Minerva here mentions the name of Telemachus in her prayer ; how comes it to pass, that Nestor is at a loss to know Telemachus ? Minerva sat close by Nestor ; he must therefore be supposed to hear the prayer ; and yet in the following lines he enquires who these strangers are ? We can scarce imagine Nestor ignorant that the son of Ulysses was named Telemachus, there being so strict a friendship between Nestor and Ulysses. Perhaps therefore Minerva prayed in secret mentally ; or perhaps Nestor might not take notice of what was not address'd immediately to him, and consequently makes inquiry about it for the greater certainty.

The banquet done, the narrative old man, 80
Thus mild, the pleasing conference began.

Now, gentle guests ! the genial banquet o'er,
It fits to ask ye, what your native shore,
And whence your race ? on what adventure,
say,

Thus far ye wander thro' the wat'ry way ? 85
Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain,
Engage your journey o'er the pathless main :
Where savage pirates seek thro' seas unknown
The lives of others, vent'rous of their own.

v. 86. *Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain, &c.*] If we form our images of persons and actions in ancient times, from the images of persons and actions in modern ages, we shall fall into great mistakes : thus in the present passage, if we annex the same idea of piracy, as it was practised three thousand years past, to piracy as it is practised in our ages ; what can be a greater affront than this inquiry of Nestor ? But, says Eustathius, piracy was formerly not only accounted lawful, but honourable. I doubt not but Thucydides had this passage in view, when he says, that the ancient poets introduce men inquiring of those who frequent the sea, if they be pirates, as a thing no way ignominious. Thucydides tells us in the same place, that all those who lived on the sea-coast, or in the islands, maintained themselves by frequent inroads upon unfortified towns, and if such piracies were nobly performed, they were accounted glorious. Herodotus also writes, that many of the ancients, especially about Thrace, thought it ignominious to live by labouring the ground, but to live by piracy and plunder was esteemed a life of honour. *Eustathius.*

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 103

Urg'd by the precepts by the Goddess giv'n, 90
And fill'd with confidence infus'd from Heav'n,
The youth, whom Pallas destin'd to be wife
And fam'd among the sons of men, replies.
Inquir'st thou, father ! from what coast we
came ?

(Oh grace and glory of the Grecian name !) 95
From where high Ithaca o'erlooks the floods,
Brown with o'er-arching shades and pendent
woods,

Us to these shores our filial duty draws,
A private sorrow, not a publick cause.
My fire I seek, where-e'er the voice of fame 100
Has told the glories of his noble name,
The great Ulysses ; fam'd from shore to shore
For valour much, for hardy suff'ring more.
Long time with thee before proud Ilion's wall
In arms he fought ; with thee beheld her fall. 105
Of all the chiefs, this hero's fate alone
Has Jove reserv'd, unheard of, and unknown ;
Whether in fields by hostile fury slain,
Or sunk by tempests in the gulfy main ?
Of this to learn, oppress'd with tender fears, 110
Lo, at thy knee his suppliant son appears.
If or thy certain eye, or curious ear,
Have learnt his fate, the whole dark story clear :
And oh ! whate'er heav'n destin'd to betide,
Let neither flatt'ry smooth, nor pity hide. 115

Prepar'd I stand : he was but born to try
 The lot of man ; to suffer, and to die.
 Oh then, if ever thro' the ten years war
 The wise, the good Ulysses claim'd thy care ;
 If e'er he join'd thy council, or thy sword, 120
 True in his deed, and constant to his word ;
 Far as thy mind thro' backward time can see,
 Search all thy stores of faithful memory :
 'Tis sacred truth I ask, and ask of thee. }

To him experienc'd Nestor thus rejoin'd : 125
 O friend ! what sorrows dost thou bring to mind ?
 Shall I the long, laborious scene review,
 And open all the wounds of Greece anew ?
 What toils by sea ! where dark in quest of prey
 Dauntless we rov'd ; Achilles led the way : 130
 What toils by land ! where mixt in fatal fight
 Such numbers fell, such heroes sunk to night :

v. 125. *The speech of Nestor.*] Eustathius observes the modesty of Nestor : Telemachus had ascribed the fall of Troy in a great measure to Nestor ; but Nestor speaks not in particular of himself, but is content with his share of glory in common with other warriors ; he speaks in the plural number, and joins all the Greeks as in the war, so in the glory of it. Nestor mentions the sufferings of the Greeks by sea, as well as by land, during the siege of Troy : to understand this, it is necessary to remember, that the Greeks made many expeditions against other places during the war, both by sea and land, as appears from many passages in the Iliad, particularly from what Achilles says in the ninth book.

There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave,
 There wife Patroclus, fill an early grave :
 There too my son—ah once my best delight, 135
 Once swift of foot, and terrible in fight,
 In whom stern courage with soft virtue join'd,
 A faultless body, and a blameless mind :
 Antilochus—what more can I relate ?
 How trace the tedious series of our fate ? 140
 Not added years on years my task could close,
 The long historian of my country's woes :
 Back to thy native islands might'st thou fail,
 And leave half-heard the melancholy tale.

v. 133. *There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave.*] I have observed, that the poet inserts into the *Odyssey* several incidents that happened after the fall of Troy, and by that method agreeably diversifies his poetry, and satisfies the curiosity of the reader. Eustathius remarks here, that he gives a title of honour to all the heroes he mentions, except only to Achilles. Achilles had been the occasion of the sufferings and death of many of the Greeks by his anger, and obstinacy in refusing to obey Agamemnon ; therefore while Nestor is lamenting the calamities of the Greeks, he passes over Achilles without any honourable mention, who had so greatly added to their sufferings. But I think this remark chimerical : one may as well say Achilles needed no epithet to distinguish him.

It is with pleasure I see the old man dwell upon the praise of Antilochus : the father enlarges upon the fame of the son ; he gives him four epithets of glory ; and while Ajax is only praised as a warrior, Antilochus is great and good, excellent in the standing fight, or swift to pursue an enemy. Longinus has observed upon the beauty of this passage.

Nine painful years on that detested shore ; 145
 What stratagems we form'd, what toils we bore ?
 Still lab'ring on, till scarce at last we found
 Great Jove propitious, and our conquest crown'd.
 Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd,
 In wit, in prudence, and in force of mind. 150
 Art thou the son of that illustrious fire ?
 With joy I grasp thee, and with love admire.
 So like your voices, and your words so wise,
 Who finds thee younger must consult his eyes.
 Thy fire and I were one ; nor vary'd ought 155
 In publick sentence, or in private thought ;
 Alike to council or th' assembly came,
 With equal souls, and sentiments the same.

v. 149. *Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd.*] Nestor speaks of Ulysses as an inseparable friend ; and it shews an excellent disposition in them both, to be rivals, and yet without envy. But the art of Nestor is remarkable ; he first gives the character to Ulysses of being superiour in wisdom to all the Greeks ; and yet at last he finds a way secretly to set himself on a level with him, if not above him ; we ever, says he, thought the same thoughts, and were ever of the same sentiments ; which though it may imply that they were of equal wisdom, yet there is room left for it to signify, that Ulysses always assented to the wisdom of Nestor. *Eustathius.*

v. 157. *The council or the assembly.*] There is a remarkable difference between *βουλὴ* and *ἀγορὰ*. The former denotes a select number of men assembled in council, the latter a publick assembly where all the people were present. *Eustathius.*

But when (by wisdom won) proud Ilion burn'd,
 And in their ships the conqu'ring Greeks return'd;
 'Twas God's high will the victors to divide, 161
 And turn th' event, confounding human pride :
 Some he destroy'd, some scatter'd as the dust,
 (Not all were prudent, and not all were just)
 Then Discord, sent by Pallas from above, 165
 Stern daughter of the great avenger Jove,
 The brother-kings inspir'd with fell debate ;
 Who call'd to council all th' Achaian state,

v. 165 *Sent by Pallas*—] Nestor in modesty conceals the reason of the anger of the Goddess; out of respect to Ajax the Locrian, who was then dead : the crime of Ajax was the violation of Cassandra, even in the temple of Minerva before her image. But why should the Goddess be angry at others for the crime of Ajax? This is because they omitted to punish the offender. If Ajax was criminal in offending, others are criminal for not punishing the offence. *Eustathius*.

The crime of Ajax is mentioned in Virgil, *Æn. i.*

— — “ Pallasnè exurere classēm

“ Argivûm, atque ipsos potuit submergere pontō,

“ Unius ab noxam, & furias Ajacis Oilei?” &c.

Could angry Pallas with revengeful spleen

The Grecian navy burn, and drown the men?

She for the fault of one offending foe,

The bolts of Jove himself presum'd to throw. *Dryd.*

Virgil borrow'd the description of the punishment of Ajax from the fourth of the *Odyssey*.

v. 168, &c. *Who call'd to council*—

But call'd untimely, &c.]

It may seem at first view, that the poet affirms the night

But call'd untimely (not the sacred rite
 Observ'd, nor heedful of the setting light, 170
 Nor herald sworn the session to proclaim)
 Sour with debauch, a reeling tribe they came.
 To these the cause of meeting they explain,
 And Menelaus moves to cross the main ;
 Not so the king of men : he will'd to stay ; 175
 The sacred rites and hecatombs to pay,
 And calm Minerva's wrath. Oh blind to fate !
 The Gods not lightly change their love, or hate.
 With ire-full taunts each other they oppose,
 'Till in loud tumult all the Greeks arose. 180

to be an improper season to convene a council. This is not his meaning: in the Iliad, there are several councils by night; nay, ἐν νυκτὶ βελλῇ is used proverbially to express the best concerted councils. What therefore Nestor here condemns is the calling not a select, but a public assembly of the soldiers in the night, when they are in no danger of an enemy, and when they are apt to fly into insolence through wine, and the joy of victory. The night is then undoubtedly an ill-chosen season: because the licence of the soldier cannot be so well restrained by night as by day. *Eustathius.*

v. 177. *Oh blind to fate !*] It may be asked why Nestor condemns so solemnly this hero, calling him Νήπιος, when he describes him in so pious an action? This is not because the Gods are implacable, for as Homer himself writes, Στεγερὸι δὲ καὶ θεοὶ αὐτοὶ; but because he vainly imagined that they would so soon be appeased, without any justice done upon the offender; ἐὼν ῥαδίως παλίντροπον are the words of Eustathius.

Now diff'rent counsels ev'ry breast divide,
 Each burns with rancour to the adverse side :
 Th' unquiet night strange projects entertain'd ;
 (So Jove, that urg'd us to our fate, ordain'd.)
 We, with the rising morn our ships unmoor'd, 185
 And brought our captives and our stores aboard ;
 But half the people with respect obey'd
 The king of men, and at his bidding stay'd.
 Now on the wings of winds our course we keep,
 (For God had smooth'd the waters of the deep) 190
 For Tenedos we spread our eager oars,
 There land, and pay due victims to the Pow'rs :
 To bless our safe return we join in pray'r,
 But angry Jove dispers'd our vows in air,
 And rais'd new discord. Then (so Heav'n de-
 creed) 195
 Ulysses first and Nestor disagreed :
 Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,
 He there, tho' late, to please the monarch, stay'd.

v. 197. *Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,
 He there, tho' late, to please the monarch, stay'd.*]

It is with great address that Nestor relates the return of Ulysses to Agamemnon; he ascribes it not directly to Ulysses, but to his associates in the voyage; he mollifies it, in complaisance to Telemachus. But Nestor, according to Dacier, conceals the true reason of his return; it was not to please Agamemnon, but out of fear of the Goddess Minerva, whose statue he had taken by force from Troy: to appease that Goddess, he returns to join in sacrifice with Agamemnon. *Eustathius.*

But I, determin'd, stem the foamy floods,
 Warn'd of the coming fury of the Gods. 200
 With us, Tydides fear'd, and urg'd his haste:
 And Menelaus came, but came the last.
 He join'd our vessels in the Lesbian bay,
 While yet we doubted of our wat'ry way;
 If to the right to urge the pilot's toil, 205
 (The safer road) beside the Pfyrian isle;
 Or the straight course to rocky Chios plow,
 And anchor under Mimas' shaggy brow?
 We sought direction of the Pow'r divine:
 The God propitious gave the guiding sign; 210
 Thro' the mid seas he bid our navy steer,
 And in Eubœa shun the woes we fear.
 The whistling winds already wak'd the sky;
 Before the whistling winds the vessels fly,
 With rapid swiftness cut the liquid way, 215
 And reach Gereftus at the point of day.
 There hecatombs of bulls, to Neptune slain,
 High-flaming please the monarch of the main.
 The fourth day shone, when all their labours o'er
 Tydides' vessels touch'd the wish'd-for shore: 220

v. 200. *Warn'd of the coming fury of the Gods.*] It may be asked how Nestor attained this knowledge of the evils which the Gods were preparing? Eustathius ascribes it to his great wisdom, which gave him an insight into futurity. Dacier with more reason tells us, that Nestor knew that Minerva had been offended, and might consequently apprehend a punishment was to be inflicted for the offence.

But I to Pylos scud before the gales,
 The God still breathing on my swelling sails;
 Sep'rate from all, I safely landed here;
 Their fates or fortunes never reach'd my ear.
 Yet what I learn'd, attend; as here I sat, 225 }
 And ask'd each voyager each hero's fate;
 Curious to know, and willing to relate. }

Safe reach'd the Myrmidons their native land,
 Beneath Achilles' warlike son's command.

v. 221. *But I to Pylos, &c.*] Eustathius observes from the antients, that the poet with great judgment suspends, and breaks off this relation of Nestor; by this method he has an opportunity to carry Telemachus to other countries, and insert into his poem the story of Menelaus and Helen: this method likewise gives an air of probability to what he writes; the poet seems afraid to deceive, and when he sends Telemachus to other parts for better intelligence, he seems to consult truth and exactness.

v. 229. *Achilles' warlike son.*] The son of Achilles was named Neoptolemus, by others Pyrrhus; his story is this: when he had reached Thessaly with the myrmidons of Achilles, by the advice of Thetis, he set fire to his vessels; and being warned by Helenus, from the oracles, to fix his habitation where he found a house whose foundations were iron, whose walls were wood, and whose roof was wool; he took his journey on foot, and coming to a certain lake of Epirus, he found some persons fixing their spears with the point downwards into the earth, and covering the tops of them with their cloaks, and after this manner making their tents: he looked upon the oracle as fulfilled, and dwelt there. Afterwards having a son by Andromache the wife of Hector, he named him Molossus, from whom the region took the name of Molossia. From this country are the Molossi canes mentioned by Virgil. *Eustathius.*

Those, whom the heir of great Apollo's art, 230
 Brave Philoctetes, taught to wing the dart;
 And those whom Idomen from Ilion's plain
 Had led, securely cross'd the dreadful main.
 How Agamemnon touch'd his Argive coast,
 And how his life by fraud and force he lost, 235
 And how the murd'rer paid his forfeit breath;
 What lands so distant from that scene of death
 But trembling heard the fame? and heard, admire
 How well the son appeas'd his slaughter'd fire!
 Ev'n to th' unhappy, that unjustly bleed, 240
 Heav'n gives posterity, t'avenge the deed.
 So fell Ægythus; and may'st thou, my friend,
 (On whom the virtues of thy fire descend)
 Make future times thy equal act adore,
 And be what brave Orestes was before! 245
 The prudent youth reply'd: O thou the grace
 And lasting glory of the Grecian race!

v. 242. *So fell Ægythus; and may'st thou, my friend, &c.* Nestor introduces the mention of Ægythus very artfully; it is to raise an emulation in Telemachus to revenge Ulysses, as Orestes had Agamemnon; it has the intended effect, and we find that Telemachus dwells upon this story with a virtuous envy; yet at the same time with great modesty; Eustathius gives a different reading in

— — — ἐσσομένοισι πύθεσθαι, or

ἐσσομένοισιν ἀοιδίην.

both the expressions are used in Homer, the preference is therefore submitted to the reader.

Book III. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 113

Just was the vengeance, and to latest days
Shall long posterity resound the praise. 249

Some God this arm with equal prowess blest !
And the proud suitors shall its force confess :
Injurious men ! who while my soul is sore
Of fresh affronts, are meditating more.
But Heav'n denies this honour to my hand,
Nor shall my father repossess the land : 255
The father's fortune never to return,
And the sad son's to suffer and to mourn !

Thus he ; and Nestor took the word : My son,
Is it then true, as distant rumours run, 259

That crowds of rivals for thy mother's charms
Thy palace fill with insults and alarms?
Say, is the fault, thro' tame submission, thine !
Or leagu'd against thee, do thy people join, }
Mov'd by some oracle, or voice divine ? }
And yet who knows, but ripening lies in fate 265
An hour of vengeance for th' afflicted state ;

v. 264. *Mov'd by some oracle, or voice divine ?*] The words in the original are, *following the voice of some God*, that is, some oracle ; Homer does not confine the expression either to a good or bad sense, but the context plainly shews, that they must be understood in a bad sense ; namely to imply, that the people had recourse to pretended oracles to justify their rebellion. This is evident from what follows, where Nestor encourages Telemachus to expect that Ulysses may punish them for their crimes, ἀπορίστας ἔλθων — if there had been no crime, there ought to be no punishment.

When great Ulysses shall suppress these harms,
Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.

v. 268. *Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.*] The poet shews his great judgment in preparing the reader for the destruction of the suitors; that great catastrophe is managed by few hands, and it might seem incredible, that so few could destroy so many: the poet therefore, to give an air of truth to his action, frequently inculcates the assistance of Pallas, which must at least shew, that such a great exploit is not impossible to be executed by stratagems and valour: it is by art, not strength, that Ulysses conquers.

All Greece in arms.

This is spoken in a general sense, and comprehends not only the subjects of Ulysses, or even the Pylians and Spartans, but implies, that all the Greeks would rise in the cause of Ulysses. What the suitors had spoken scoffingly in the preceding book, that Telemachus was failing to Pyle or Sparta for supplies, appears in this not to be impracticable; so that it was choice and not necessity that determined the poet to make use of no such easy expedients for the destruction of the suitors. *Eustathius.*

It may be added, that the very nature of Epick Poetry, and of the Odyssey in particular, requires such a conduct: in the Iliad Achilles is the chief agent, and performs almost all the great actions; Æneas is painted after the same manner by Virgil; the one kills Hector, the other Turnus, both which are the decisive actions: it was equally necessary to exalt the character of Ulysses, by bringing him into difficulties from which he is personally to extricate himself: this the poet sufficiently brings about by refusing all the easy methods for his re-establishment, because the more difficult ways are most conducive to the honour of his hero: thus as Achilles and Æneas kill Hector and Turnus with their own hands, so the suitors fall chiefly

But if Athena, war's triumphant maid,
 The happy son, will, as the father, aid, 270
 (Whose fame and safety was her constant care
 In ev'ry danger and in ev'ry war :
 Never on man did heav'nly favour shine
 With rays so strong, distinguish'd and divine,
 As those with which Minerva mark'd thy fire) 275
 So might she love thee, so thy soul inspire !
 Soon shou'd their hopes in humble dust be laid,
 And long oblivion of the bridal bed.
 Ah ! no such hope (the prince with sighs replies)
 Can touch my breast ; that blessing heav'n denies.
 Ev'n by celestial favour were it giv'n, 281
 Fortune or fate wou'd cross the will of Heav'n.

by the hand of Ulysses. It is necessary for the hero of the poem to execute the decisive action, for by this method the poet completes his character, his own greatness surmounts all difficulties, and he goes off the stage with the utmost advantage, by leaving a noble character upon the mind of the spectators.

v. 282. *Fortune or fate wou'd cross the will of heav'n.*] It may be asked how an expression so near blasphemy, as Eustathius observes, could escape a person of such piety as Telemachus ? It is true, the poet makes Minerva herself correct it ; but yet the objection remains, viz. how could Telemachus speak it ? I think since the poet himself condemns it, we may give it up as an indecency in Telemachus ; it is natural for men in despair (and that was the condition of Telemachus) to use a vehemence of expression, and this might transport Telemachus beyond the bounds of prudence. The only possible way that occurs

What words are these, and what imprudence
thine ?

(Thus interpos'd the martial Maid divine)
Forgetful youth ! but know, the Pow'r above 285
With ease can save each object of his love ;
Wide as his will, extends his boundless grace ;
Nor lost in time, nor circumscrib'd by place.
Happier his lot, who many sorrows past,
Long lab'ring gains his natal shore at last ; 290

to me to take off the impiety, is to have recourse to
Destiny : it was the opinion of the ancients, that the Gods
could not alter Destiny : and then Telemachus may mean
no more, than that it was decreed by the Destinies that
Ulysses should return no more, so the Gods themselves
could not restore him.

Thus in the xvth of the Metamorphosis, Venus in vain
applies to the Gods to preserve Julius Cæsar.

— — “ Superosque movet, qui rumpere quanquam
“ Ferrea non possunt veterum decreta fororum,” &c.

And a little lower Jupiter says to Venus,

— — — “ Sola insuperabile fatum,
“ Nata, movere paras ?”

v. 289. *Happier his lot, who, &c.*] Nothing can be better
imagined to encourage Telemachus, than what the poet
here delivers : Minerva sets Agamemnon in opposition to
Ulysses : Agamemnon made a speedy voyage to his
country, and there fell by treachery : Ulysses has long
been absent, but yet is happier than Agamemnon : the
Gods perhaps reserve him for better fortunes, at least no-
thing can be concluded from his long absence, and this is
sufficient to teach Telemachus not to despair. *Eustathius.*

Book III. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 117

Than who too speedy, hastes to end his life
 By some stern ruffian, or adult'rous wife.
 Death only is the lot which none can miss,
 And all is possible to Heav'n, but this.
 The best, the dearest fav'rite of the sky 295
 Must taste that cup, for man is born to die.
 Thus check'd, reply'd Ulysses' prudent heir :
 Mentor, no more — the mournful thought forbear ;
 For he no more must draw his country's breath,
 Already snatch'd by fate, and the black doom of
 death ! 300
 Pass we to other subjects ; and engage
 On themes remote the venerable sage :

v. 294. *And all is possible to Heav'n, but this.*] What Minerva here says justifies the remark I made, that what Telemachus seemed to have spoken rashly, may be softened, if not vindicated, by having recourse to Destiny : it is evident from this passage, that Destiny was superiour to the power of the Gods ; otherwise Minerva speaks as blasphemously as Telemachus : for what difference is there between saying, that the Gods cannot preserve even those they love from death, and saying that the Gods could not save Ulysses ? Why therefore may not the words of Telemachus be thought to have a respect to Destiny ?

I am of opinion, that the poet had something further in view by putting these words into the mouth of Minerva : the words of Telemachus, if taken grossly, might appear shocking to so pious a person as Nestor, and make an ill impression upon him to the disadvantage of Telemachus ; Minerva therefore artfully explains it, and softens the horror of it by reconciling it to the theology of those ages.

v. 301. *Pass we to other subjects ;—*] Telemachus here puts several questions, as it were in a breath, to Nestor ;

(Who thrice has seen the perishable kind
Of men decay, and thro' three ages shin'd,
Like Gods majestic, and like Gods in mind.) 305 }

For much he knows, and just conclusions draws
From various precedents, and various laws.

O son of Neleus! awful Nestor, tell

How he, the mighty Agamemnon fell? 309

and Plutarch observes upon this passage, that he who enquires any thing of an old man, though the old man himself has no concern in the story, wins his heart at once; and incites a person, who is upon all occasions very willing to discourse. He introduces this as an instance of the art Telemachus uses, in adapting himself by his questions to the temper of the person with whom he converses: he puts together, continues he, several questions upon several subjects, which is more judicious than to confine his answer to a single interrogatory, and by that method deprive Nestor of one of the most pleasant enjoyments of old age, I mean the pleasure of talking. *Plutarch. Sympotic.*

v. 303. *Who thrice had seen the perishable kind
Of men decay, —]*

The poet here tells us that Nestor was now in his fourth generation: Ovid took the word *γένηα* to signify an hundred years; but then Nestor must have been above three hundred years old. Others with more probability understand it to signify a generation, or such a portion of time in which any race of men flourish together, which is computed to be about thirty years. I refer the reader to the note of the 333d verse of the first book of the Iliad, for the particular age of Nestor. According to that computation, he must now be about ninety-five years of age.

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 119

By what strange fraud Ægyſthus wrought, relate,
(By force he could not) ſuch a hero's fate?
Liv'd Menelaus not in Greece! or where,
Was then the martial brother's pious care?
Condemn'd perhaps ſome foreign ſhore to tread;
Or ſure Ægyſthus had not dar'd the deed. 315

To whom the full of days. Illuſtrious youth,
Attend (tho' partly thou haſt gueſt) the truth.
For had the martial Menelaus found
The ruſſian breathing yet on Argive ground;
Nor earth had hid his carcaſe from the ſkies, 320
Nor Grecian virgins ſhriek'd his obſequies.
But fowls obſcene diſmember'd his remains,
And dogs had torn him on the naked plains.
While us the works of bloody Mars employ'd,
The wanton youth inglorious peace enjoy'd; 325
He, ſtretch'd at eaſe in Argos' calm recess,
(Whoſe ſtately ſteeds luxuriant paſtures bleſs)
With flattery's inſinuating art
Sooth'd the frail queen, and poiſon'd all her heart.

v. 309. *How he, the mighty Agamemnon fell?*] Telema-
chus does not aſk this queſtion out of curioſity, but with
great judgment; he knows there were deſigns againſt his
life, as well as there had been againſt Agamemnon; he
therefore aſks it, that he may learn how to defeat them;
chiefly to inſtruct himſelf how beſt to aſſiſt his father upon
his return, by aiding him in eſcaping the ſnares of the
ſuitors. *Dacier.*

At first with worthy shame and decent pride; 330
 The royal dame his lawless suit deny'd.
 For virtue's image yet possess'd her mind,
 Taught by a master of the tuneful kind:
 Atreides, parting for the Trojan war,
 Consign'd the youthful consort to his care. 335

v. 333. *Taught by a master of the tuneful kind.*] Homer through the whole *Odyssey* speaks much in honour of the art which he himself loved, and in which he so eminently excelled: from these and other passages we may learn the state of poetry in those ages: "Poets (says Eustathius) were ranked in the class of philosophers; and the ancients made use of them as preceptors in musick and morality:" Strabo quotes this very passage as an instance of the excellence of poetry in forming the soul to worthy actions: Ægythus could not debauch Clytemnestra, until he banished the poet who was her guide and instructor.

Various are the conjectures of the ancients about the name of the bard here celebrated: some, says Eustathius, tell us, it was Chariades, some Demodocus, some Glaucus, &c. but I pass them over, because they are conjectures.

There were many degrees of these ἀοιδοί; some were ἀοιδοὶ θεῶν, others ἀοιδοὶ περὶ γάμους; but such bards as are here mentioned were of an higher station, and retained as instructors by kings and princes.

I cannot omit one remark of Eustathius: he tells us, that some persons write that these ἀοιδοί had their names from hence, ὡς ἀοιδοὶ αὐτὸν ἔχοντες: exactly resembling the modern Italian singers: Madam Dacier is not to be forgiven for passing over a remark of such importance: if this be true, it makes a great difference between the ancient and modern poets, and is the only advantage I know we have over them.

True to his charge, the bard preserv'd her long
 In honour's limits ; such the pow'r of song.
 But when the Gods these objects of their hate
 Dragg'd to destruction, by the links of fate ;
 The bard they banish'd from his native soil, 340
 And left all helpless in a desert isle :
 There he, the sweetest of the sacred train,
 Sung dying to the rocks, but sung in vain.
 Then virtue was no more ; her guard away,
 She fell, to lust a voluntary prey. 345
 Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse,
 With impious thanks, and mockery of vows,

v. 344. *Then virtue was no more ; her guard away,
 She fell, ——— &c.]*

There is a fine moral couched in the story of the bard and Clytemnestra : it admirably paints the advantage we draw from wise companions for the improvement of our virtues : Clytemnestra was chaste, because her instructor was wise : his wisdom was an insuperable guard to her modesty. It was long before she yielded ; virtue and honour had a long contest ; but she no sooner yielded to adultery, but she assisted in the murder of her husband ; from whence we may draw another moral, that one vice betrays us into another : and when once the fences of honour are thrown down, we become a prey to every passion. *Dacier.*

v. 346. *Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse.]*
 Here is a surprising mixture of religion and impiety : Ægythus, upon the accomplishment of so great a crime as adultery, returns thanks to the Gods by oblations, as if they had assisted him in the execution of it. Nestor dwells upon it at large, to shew that Ægythus greatly aggravated his guilt by such a piece of impious devotion. *Dacier.*

With images, with garments, and with gold ;
And od'rous fumes from loaded altars roll'd.

Meantime from flaming Troy we cut the way,
With Menelaus, thro' the curling sea. 351

But when to Sunium's sacred point we came,
Crown'd with the temple of th' Athenian dame ;
Atrides' pilot, Phrontes, there expir'd ;
(Phrontes, of all the sons of men admir'd 355

To steer the bounding bark with steady toil,
When the storm thickens, and the billows boil)
While yet he exercis'd the steerman's art,
Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart ;
Ev'n with the rudder in his hand, he fell. 360
To pay whose honours to the shades of hell,

v. 359. *Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart.*] Homer calls the darts of Apollo ἀγᾶρά, or gentle ; to signify that those who die thus suddenly, die without pain. *Eustathius.*

Dacier complains that some criticks think Homer worthy of blame for enlarging upon so mean a person as a pilot. It is a sufficient answer to observe, that arts were in high esteem in those times, and men that were eminent in them were in great honour. Neither were arts then confined as in these ages to mean personages : no less a person than Ulysses builds a vessel in the sequel of the *Odyssey* ; so that this is a false piece of delicacy. If Homer be culpable, so is Virgil ; he gives the genealogy of Palinurus, as well as Homer of Phrontes. Virgil's description is censured as too long, Homer concludes his in seven lines ; and lastly, Virgil's Episode has been judged by the criticks to be an unnecessary ornament, and to contribute nothing to the poem ; Homer relates the death of Phrontes, to introduce the dispersion of the fleet of Menelaus ; the fleet might well be scattered, when it wanted so excellent a pilot.

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 123

We check'd our haste, by pious office bound,
 And laid our old companion in the ground..
 And now the rites discharg'd, our course we keep
 Far on the gloomy bosom of the deep : 365
 Soon as Malæa's misty tops arise,
 Sudden the thund'rer blackens all the skies,
 And the winds whistle, and the furies roll
 Mountains on mountains, and obscure the pole.
 The tempest scatters, and divides our fleet ; 370
 Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete,
 Where winding round the rich Cydonian plain,
 The streams of Jordan issue to the main.
 There stands a rock, high eminent and steep,
 Whose shaggy brow o'erhangs the shady deep, 375
 And views Gortyna on the western side ;
 On this rough Auster drove th' impetuous tide :
 With broken force the billows roll'd away,
 And heav'd the fleet into the neighb'ring bay.
 Thus sav'd from death, they gain'd the Phæstian
 shores, 380
 With shatter'd vessels, and disabled oars :

v. 371. *Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete.*] Homer does not amuse us by relating what became of these companions of Menelaus ; he omits this judiciously, and follows the thread of his story : Menelaus is the person whom the poet has in view ; he therefore passes over the story of his companions, to carry on the fable of the poem by leading us directly to Menelaus.

But five tall barks the winds and waters tost,
 Far from their fellows, on th' Ægyptian coast.
 There wander'd Menelaus thro' foreign shores,
 Amassing gold, and gath'ring naval stores; 385
 While curst Ægythus the detested deed
 By fraud fulfill'd, and his great brother bled.
 Sev'n years, the traitor rich Mycenæ sway'd,
 And his stern rule the groaning land obey'd;
 The eighth, from Athens to his realm restor'd,
 Orestes brandish'd the revenging sword, 391

v. 383. ——— *On th' Ægyptian coast.*] In the original it is, *The wind and water carries them to Ægyptus*. Homer by Ægyptus means the river Nile, and then it is always used in the masculine gender; the region about it took its name from the river Ægyptus, this is always used in the feminine gender; but the country had not received that name in the days of Homer. *Eustathius*.

What Dacier adds to this observation, may assist in determining the dispute concerning the priority of Homer and Hesiod: Hesiod makes mention of the river Nilus; if therefore it be true that Ægyptus had not been called by the name of Nilus in the times of Homer, it is a demonstration that Hesiod was posterior to Homer; otherwise he could not have been acquainted with any other name but that of Ægyptus.

v. 390. *From Athens to his realm* ———] There is a different reading in this place; instead of ἀπ' Ἀθηνῶν, some write ἀπὸ Φωκῆων; for Orestes was educated by Strophius, king of Phocis, and father of Pylades: the ancients reconcile the difference, by saying that Orestes might be sent from Phocis to Athens for his education, and returning thence to his own country, might revenge the death of

Slew the dire pair, and gave to fun'ral flame
 The vile assassin, and adult'rous dame.
 That day, ere yet the bloody triumphs cease,
 Return'd Atrides to the coast of Greece, 395
 And safe to Argos' port his navy brought,
 With gifts of price and pond'rous treasure fraught.
 Hence warn'd, my son beware! nor idly stand
 Too long a stranger to thy native land ;
 Lest heedless absence wear thy health away, 400
 While lawless feasters in thy palace sway ;
 Perhaps may seize thy realm, and share the spoil ;
 And thou return, with disappointed toil, }
 From thy vain journey, to a rifled isle.
 Howe'er, my friend, indulge one labour more,
 And seek Atrides on the Spartan shore. 406
 He, wand'ring long, a wider circle made,
 And many-languag'd nations has survey'd ;
 And measur'd tracts unknown to other ships,
 Amid the monstrous wonders of the deeps ; 410
 (A length of ocean and unbounded sky,
 Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly)

his father Agamemnon ; so that although he was first bred
 up in Phocis, he was afterwards a sojourner in Athens.
Eustathius.

V. 411. *A length of ocean and unbounded sky,
 Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly.]*

It must be confess'd, that Nestor greatly exaggerates this de-
 scription : Homer himself tells us, that a ship may sail in
 five days from Crete to Ægypt ; wherefore then this hy-

Go then ; to Sparta take the wat'ry way,
 Thy ship and sailors but for orders stay ;
 Or if by land thou chuse thy course to bend, 415
 My steeds, my chariots, and my sons attend :
 Thee to Atrides they shall safe convey,
 Guides of thy road, companions of thy way.
 Urge him with truth to frame his free replies,
 And sure he will ; for Menelaus is wise. 420

Thus while he speaks, the ruddy sun descends,
 And twilight grey her ev'ning shade extends.
 Then thus the blue-ey'd Maid : O full of days !
 Wise are thy words, and just are all thy ways.

perbole of Nestor ? It might perhaps be to deter Telemachus from a design of sailing to Crete, and he through his inexperience might believe the description. It may be added, that what Nestor speaks concerning the flight of birds, may be only said to shew the great distance of that sea : nay, by a favourable interpretation it may be reconciled to truth ; the meaning then must be this : should a person observe that sea a whole year, he would not see one bird flying over it, both because of the vastness and dreadfulness of it ; and perhaps the whole of this might arise from the observation, that this sea is not frequented by birds. This is wholly and almost literally taken from Eustathius : and if we add to this the ignorance of the sea and sea-affairs in those ages, we shall the less wonder to hear so wise a man as Nestor describing it with so much terrour. Navigation is now greatly improved, and the moderns sail further in a month, than the ancients could in a year ; their whole art consisting chiefly in coasting along the shores, and consequently they made but little way.

Now immolate the tongues, and mix the wine,
 Sacred to Neptune and the Pow'rs divine. 426
 The lamp of day is quench'd beneath the deep,
 And soft approach the balmy hours of sleep :
 Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,
 Timeless, indecent, but retire to rest. 430

v. 425. *Now immolate the tongues*—] Various are the reasons which Eustathius reports concerning this oblation of the tongues at the conclusion of the sacrifice. It was to purge themselves from any evil words they might have uttered ; or because the tongue was reckoned the best part of the sacrifice, and so reserved for the completion of it : or they offered the tongue to the Gods, as witnesses to what they had spoken. I omit the rest as superfluous. They had a custom of offering the tongues to Mercury, because they believed him the giver of eloquence. Dacier expatiates upon this custom. The people, says she, might fear, lest through wine and the joy of the festival, they might have uttered some words unbecoming the sanctity of the occasion : by this sacrifice of the tongues they signified that they purged away whatever they had spoken amiss during the festival ; and asked in particular the pardon of Mercury, who presided over discourse, to the end they might not carry home any uncleanness which might stop the blessings expected from the sacrifice.

v. 429. *Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,*
Timeless, indecent, &c.]

Eustathius shews the difference between ἐορταί, festivals, and θυσιαί, or sacrifices : in the former it was customary to spend the whole night in wine and rejoicing : in the latter, this was reckoned an unlawful custom. through

So spake Jove's daughter, the celestial Maid.
 The sober train attended and obey'd.
 The sacred heralds on their hands around
 Pour'd the full urns; the youths the goblets crown'd;
 From bowl to bowl the holy bev'rage flows; 435
 While to the final sacrifice they rose.
 The tongues they cast upon the fragrant flame,
 And pour, above, the consecrated stream.
 And now, their thirst by copious draughts allay'd,
 The youthful hero and th' Athenian Maid 440
 Propose departure from the finish'd rite,
 And in their hollow bark to pass the night:
 But this the hospitable sage deny'd.
 Forbid it Jove! and all the Gods! he cry'd,
 Thus from my walls the much-lov'd son to send
 Of such a hero, and of such a friend! 446
 Me, as some needy peasant, would ye leave,
 Whom heav'n denies the blessing to relieve?

the fear of falling into any indecencies through wine. He likewise gives another reason of this injunction, by telling us that it was the custom to offer sacrifices to the celestial powers in the day, and even to finish them about the setting of the sun; and that those who dealt in incantations performed their sacrifices to the infernal Powers by night, and finished them before sun-rising. Either of these reasons sufficiently explains the words of the Goddess; and the former carries in it an excellent moral, that particular care should be taken in our acts of devotion, not to turn religion into impiety.

Me would you leave, who boast imperial sway,
 When beds of royal state invite your stay? 450
 No—long as life this mortal shall inspire,
 Or as my children imitate their fire,
 Here shall the wand'ring stranger find his home,
 And hospitable rites adorn the dome.

v. 450. *When beds of royal state invite your stay?*] This passage gives us a full insight into the manners of these hospitable ages: they not only kept a treasury for bowls or vases of gold or silver, to give as *ξενίαι*, or gifts of hospitality, but also a wardrobe of various habits and rich furniture, to lodge and bestow upon strangers. Eustathius relates, that Teliias of Agrigentum was a person of so great hospitality, that five hundred horsemen coming to his house in the winter season, he entertained them, and gave every man a cloak and a tunick. This laudable custom prevailed, and still prevails, in the eastern countries: it was the practice of Abraham of old, and is at this day of the Turks, as we may learn from their caravanseras, erected for the reception of travellers. And yet Dacier observes, that a French critick has shewed so ill a taste as to ridicule this passage. “ Telemachus (says that “ author) being entertained by Nestor, intimates his intention of returning to lodge on ship-board with his “ companions: but Nestor detains him, by asking him “ if he thought he had not quilts or coverlets to give him “ a night's lodging: upon this Telemachus goes to bed “ in a resounding gallery, and Nestor in a bed which his “ wife made ready for him.” The noblest things are most liable to burlesque, by perverting their meaning; as some pictures, by varying the position, represent a man or a monster. He is very severe upon the *resounding gallery*, which in truth means no more than very lofty or elevated, and by consequence very noble and magnificent.

Well hast thou spoke, (the blue-ey'd Maid re-
plies) 455

Belov'd old man ! benevolent as wise.

Be the kind dictates of thy heart obey'd,

And let thy words Telemachus persuade :

He to thy palace shall thy steps pursue ;

I to the ship to give the orders due,

Prescribe directions, and confirm the crew. 460 }

For I alone sustain their naval cares,

Who boast experience from these silver hairs ;

All youths the rest, whom to this journey move

Like years, like tempers, and their prince's love.

There in the vessel shall I pass the night ;

And soon as morning paints the fields of light,

I go to challenge from the Caucons bold,

A debt, contracted in the days of old. 466

v. 468. *I go to challenge from the Caucons.*] The poet makes a double use of these words of the Goddess ; she gives an air of probability to her excuse, why she should not be pressed to stay ; and at the same time Homer avoids the absurdity of introducing the Goddess at Sparta ; Menelaus and Helen are celebrating the nuptials of their son and daughter : Minerva is a virgin Deity, and consequently an enemy to all nuptial ceremonies. *Eustathius.*

But it may be necessary to observe who those Caucons are : we find in the tenth book of the *Iliad*, the Caucons mentioned as auxiliaries to Troy : there Dolon says,

The Carians, Caucons, the Pelasgian host,
And Leleges encamp along the coast.

Are these Caucons the same with those here mentioned ?
Eustathius informs us, that there was a people of Tri-

Book III. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 131

But this thy guest, receiv'd with friendly care, 470
Let thy strong courfers swift to Sparta bear ;
Prepare thy chariot at the dawn of day,
And be thy son companion of his way.

Then turning with the word, Minerva flies,
And soars an eagle thro' the liquid skies. 475

Vision divine ! the throng'd spectators gaze
In holy wonder fix'd, and still amaze.
But chief the rev'rend sage admir'd ; he took
The hand of young Telemachus, and spoke,

phyly, between Elis and Pylos, named Caucons : but Strabo says, that the whole race is now extinct, and that these here mentioned are of Dymæa, and take their name from the river Caucon : whereas those in the Iliad are Paphlagonians : they were a wandering nation, and consequently might be the same people originally, and retain the same name in different countries.

v. 478. *But chief the rev'rend sage admir'd—*] It may be asked why Nestor is in such surprise at the discovery of the Goddess: it is evident from the Iliad, that he had been no stranger to such intercourses of the Deities; nay, in this very book Nestor tells us, that Ulysses enjoyed almost the constant presence of Minerva; insomuch that Sophocles, the great imitator of Homer, relates, that he knew the Goddess by her voice without seeing her. Eustathius answers, that the wonder of Nestor arose not from the discovery of that Deity, but that she should accompany so young a person as Telemachus: after her departure the old man stood amazed, and looked upon that hero as some very extraordinary person, whom in such early years the Goddess of war and wisdom had vouchsafed to attend. This interpretation agrees perfectly with what Nestor speaks to Telemachus.

Oh happy youth ! and favour'd of the skies,
Distinguish'd care of guardian Deities ! 481

v. 481. *Distinguish'd care of guardian Deities !*] I will take this opportunity to obviate an objection that may be made against all the interposition of the Gods in assisting the heroes of the *Odyssey* : it has been thought by some criticks a disparagement to them to stand in continual need of such supernatural succour : if two persons were engaged in combat, and a third person should immediately step in to the assistance of one of the parties, and kill the adversary, would it not reflect upon the valour of his friend who was so weak as to want assistance ? Why, for instance, should Jupiter help *Æneas* to kill *Turnus* ? Was not he brave enough to fight, and strong enough to conquer his enemy by his own prowess ? and would not *Turnus* have killed *Æneas* with the same assistance ? It is therefore a disparagement to the actors, thus continually to supply the defects of a hero by the power of a Deity.

But this is a false way of arguing, and from hence it might be inferred, that the love and favour of a Deity serves only to make those whom he assists, and those who depend upon such assistance, appear weak, impotent, cowardly, and unworthy to be conquerors. Can any doubt arise whether the love and favour of a God be a disparagement or honour to those whom he favours ? According to these criticks, we should find the character of a perfect hero in an impious *Mezentius*, who acknowledges no God but his own arm and his own sword : it is true, the objection would be just, if the hero himself performed nothing of the action ; or if when he were almost conquered by the superiour valour of his enemy, he owed his life and victory to Gods and miracles : but the hero always behaves himself in all his actions, as if he were to gain success without the assistance of the Deity ; and the presence of the Gods is so ordered, that we may retrench every thing

Whose early years for future worth engage,
 No vulgar manhood, no ignoble age.
 For lo! none other of the court above
 Than she, the daughter of almighty Jove, 485
 Pallas herself, the war-triumphant maid,
 Confest is thine, as once thy father's aid.
 So guide me, Goddess! so propitious shine
 On me, my consort, and my royal line!

that is miraculous, without making any alteration in the action or character of the human personages. Thus in the instance of Æneas and Turnus, though Jupiter favours Æneas, yet Æneas is painted in stronger colours of fortitude, he appears superiour, as a man unassisted, and able to conquer Turnus; and consequently the favour of Jupiter makes no alteration in the action or character of Æneas.

There is likewise a wide difference between the assistance of a man and of a God: the actions of men belong only to the performers of those actions: but when a Deity assists us by inspiring us with strength and courage, the actions we perform are really our own, and the more he favours us, the more glory he gives us: so that the assistance of man eclipses, but the assistance of a God exalts, our glory. Thus, for instance, when Achilles is pursuing Hector, he charges the Greeks to keep off from Hector, their assistance might lessen his glory: but when Pallas offers her assistance, he immediately embraces it as an honour, and boasts of it as such to Hector. I have been large upon this objection, because the reader ought to carry it in his memory through the whole poem, and apply it to every action, in which any share is ascribed to any Deity. See Bossu more at large concerning this objection.

134 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

A yearling bullock to thy name shall smoke, 490
Untam'd, unconscious of the galling yoke,
With ample forehead, and yet tender horns,
Whose budding honours ductile gold adorns.

Submissive thus the hoary fire preferr'd
His holy vow : the fav'ring Goddess heard. 495
Then slowly rising, o'er the sandy space
Precedes the father, follow'd by his race,
(A long procession) timely marching home
In comely order to the regal dome.

There when arriv'd, on thrones around him
plac'd, 500

His sons and grandsons the wide circle grac'd.
To these the hospitable sage, in sign
Of social welcome, mix'd the racy wine,
(Late from the mellowing cask restor'd to light,
By ten long years refin'd, and rosy-bright.) 505

To Pallas high the foaming bowl he crown'd,
And sprinkled large libations on the ground.
Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.

Deep in a rich alcove the prince was laid, 510
And slept beneath the pompous colonade ;
Fast by his side Pisistratus lay spread,
(In age his equal) on a splendid bed :
But in an inner court, securely clos'd,
The rev'rend Nestor and his queen repos'd. 515

When now Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn ;

The old man early rose, 'walk'd forth, and sat
 On polish'd stone before his palace gate :
 With unguents smooth the lucid marble throne,
 Where ancient Neleus sat, a rustick throne ; 521
 But he descending to th' infernal shade,
 Sage Nestor fill'd it, and the scepter sway'd.
 His sons around him mild obeisance pay,
 And duteous take the orders of the day. 525
 First Echephron and Stratius quit their bed ;
 Then Perseus, Aretus, and Thrasymed ;
 The last Pifistratus arose from rest :
 They came, and near him plac'd the stranger-guest.

v. 518. — — — — — *And sat on polish'd stone before his palace-gate.*] We have here an ancient custom recorded by the poet ; a king places himself before the gate of his palace upon a seat of marble, worn smooth by long use, says Eustathius, or perhaps smoothed exquisitely by the hand of the workman. What I would chiefly observe is ; that they placed themselves thus in publick for the dispatch of justice ; we read in scripture of judges *sitting in the gate* : and that this procedure of Nestor was for that purpose, is probable from the expression, *He sat in the seat where Neleus* [*μῆτορ, or Consiliarius,*] *used to sit,* (which seems to express his wisdom in the discharge of justice.) Nestor is also described as bearing his scepter in his hand, which was never used but upon some act of regality, in the dispatch of justice, or other solemn occasions. Perhaps, says Dacier, these seats or thrones might be consecrated with oil, to draw a reverence to the seats of justice as by an act of religion ; but I rather judge (adds she) that no more is meant than to express the shining of these thrones, they being undoubtedly made of marble.

v. 528. *Pifistratus.*] Would I indulge my fancy in a conjecture, I might suppose that the famous tyrant Pifistratu

To these the senior thus declar'd his will : 530
 My sons ! the dictates of your fire fulfil.
 To Pallas, first of Gods, prepare the feast,
 Who grac'd our rites, a more than mortal guest.
 Let one, dispatchful, bid some swain to lead
 A well-fed bullock from the grassy mead ; 535
 One seek the harbour where the vessels moor,
 And bring thy friends, Telemachus ! ashore,
 (Leave only two the galley to attend)
 Another to Laerceus must we send,
 Artist divine, whose skilful hands infold 540
 The victim's horn with circumfusile gold.

was descended or borrowed his name from this son of Nestor. Herodotus informs us, as Eustathius observes, that all the Pisistrati were originally Pyliaus. If this be true, we have a very strong evidence that Homer is not all fiction, but that he celebrates the great men of those ages with reality, and only embellishes the true story with the ornaments of poetry.

v. 549. *Laerceus—Artist divine, &c.*] The author of the Parallel quotes this passage to prove that Homer was ignorant of the mechanick arts: we have here, says he, a gilder with his anvil and hammer: but what occasion has he for an anvil and hammer in the art of a gilder? Boileau has excellently vindicated Homer from this objection, in his reflections upon Longinus; this gilder was a gold-beater: Nestor, we see, furnished the gold, and he beat it into leaves, so that he had occasion to make use of his anvil and hammer; the anvil was portable, because the work was not laborious. Our modern travellers assure us, that it is at this day the practice of the eastern regions, as in Persia, &c. for the artists in metals to carry about with

The rest may here the pious duty share,
And bid the handmaids for the feast prepare,
The seats to range, the fragrant wood to bring,
And limpid waters from the living spring. 545

He said, and busy each his care bestow'd;
Already at the gates the bullock low'd,
Already came the Ithacensian crew,
The dext'rous smith the tools already drew:
His pond'rous hammer, and his anvil found, 550
And the strong tongs to turn the metal round.
Nor was Minerva absent from the rite,
She view'd her honours, and enjoy'd the sight.

them the whole implements of trade, to the house of the person where they find employment; it is therefore a full vindication of Homer, to observe that the gold this artist used in gilding, was nothing but gold beat into fine leaves.

v. 552. *Nor was Minerva absent—*] It may be asked in what sense Minerva can be said to come to the sacrifice? Eustathius answers, that the ancients finding the inclinations of men to be bent incontinently upon pleasures, to oblige them to use them moderately, distinguished times, ordained sacrifices, and representing the Gods in the forms of men, brought them to use those pleasures with discretion; they taught them that the Gods came down to their libations and sacrifices, to induce them to govern their conversation with reverence and modesty: thus Jupiter and the other Gods in the Iliad, and Neptune in the Odyssey, are said to feast with the Æthiopians.

If I might be pardoned a conjecture, I would suppose, that Minerva may in another sense be said to come to the sacrifice; I mean by her image or statue; and what may seem to confirm this opinion, is what Diodorus relates in his third book concerning the abovementioned Æthio-

With rev'rend hand the king presents the gold,
 Which round th' intort' horns the gilder roll'd ;
 Sowrought, as Pallas might with pride behold. 556
 Young Aretus from forth his bridal bow'r
 Brought the full laver, o'er their hands to pour,
 And canisters of consecrated flour.
 Stratius and Echephron the victim led ; 560
 The ax was held by warlike Thrasymed,

prians; they carried about the statues of Jupiter and the other Gods twelve days, during which time the Gods were said to be gone to the Æthiopians: and if the Gods may be said to come to the Æthiopians by their statues, why may not the same be said of Minerva, from the introduction of her statue among the Pylians? So that the appearance of the Goddesses may possibly mean the appearance of her statue.

v. 560. *Stratius and Echephron, &c.*] Nestor here makes use only of the ministry of his sons; the reason of it is, because it was reckoned honourable to serve in the performance of sacrifice, this being in some sense an attending upon the Gods; or because it was the practice of those ages for great persons to do those offices with their own hands, which in the latter have been performed by servants.

Eustathius reports a saying of Antigonus, who observing his son behaving himself imperiously to his subjects, "Know'st thou not, says he, that royalty itself is but illustrious servitude!" An intimation that he himself was but a servant of the publick, and therefore should use his servants with moderation.

But the true reason of Nestor's assisting in the sacrifice is, because kings anciently had the inspection of religion, and priesthood was joined to royalty, according to that of Virgil,

"Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Phœbique sacerdos."

In act to strike: before him Perseus stood,
 The vase extending to receive the blood.
 The king himself initiates to the Pow'r ;
 Scatters with quiv'ring hand the sacred flour, 565
 And the stream sprinkles: from the curling brows
 The hair collected in the fire he throws.
 Soon as due vows on ev'ry part were paid,
 And sacred wheat upon the victim laid,
 Strong Thrasymed discharg'd the speedy blow 570
 Full on his neck, and cut the nerves in two.
 Down sunk the heavy beast: the females round,
 Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling sound.
 Nor scorn'd the queen the holy choir to join,
 (The first-born she, of old Clymenus' line ; 575

v. 573. *Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling sound.*] I have kept the meaning of the word in the original, which signifies prayers made with loud cries, ὀλόλυξαν. Ὀλολύγη, says Hesychius, is, φωνὴ γυναικῶν ἢν ποιῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὐχόμεναι, *the voice of women, which they make at sacrifices in their prayers.* But there is still something in it more to the present purpose; the scholiast upon Æschylus remarks that this word is not used properly but when applied to the prayers offered to Minerva, for Minerva is the only Goddess to whom prayers are made with loud cries, she being the Goddess of war; to other deities they offer prayer with thanksgiving; καὶ γὰρ μόνῃ τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ δαίμονι ἔσθ' ὑπολειπμένη ὀλολύγεσι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις θεοῖς παιανίζουσι.

Thus also in the sixth book of the Iliad, v. 301.

Αἶ' δ' ὀλολυγῇ πᾶσαι Ἀθήνη χεῖρας ἀνεσχον.

They fill the dome with supplicating cries.

And in the present passage in the Odyssey,

— — — αἶ' δ' ὀλόλυξαν

Οὐιατέρες τε, υἱοί τε, &c.

Dacier.

In youth by Nestor lov'd, of spotless fame,
 And lov'd in age, Eurydice her name.)
 From earth they rear him, struggling now with
 death ;

And Nestor's youngest stops the vents of breath.
 The soul for ever flies : on all sides round 580
 Streams the black blood, and smokes upon the
 ground.

The beast they then divide, and disunite
 The ribs and limbs, observant of the rite :
 On these, in double cawls involv'd with art,
 The choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part. 585

The sacred sage before his altar stands,
 Turns the burnt-off'ring with his holy hands,
 And pours the wine, and bids the flames aspire :
 The youth with instruments surround the fire.
 The thighs now sacrific'd, and entrails drest, 590

Th' assistants part, transfix, and broil the rest.
 While these officious tend the rites divine,
 The last fair branch of the Nestorean line,
 Sweet Polycaste, took the pleasing toil 594
 To bathe the prince, and pour the fragrant oil.

v. 594. *Sweet Polycaste, took the pleasing toil
 To bathe the prince, &c.]*

It is very necessary to say something about this practice of women bathing and anointing men ; it frequently occurs through the whole *Odyssey*, and is so contrary to the usage of the moderns, as to give offence to modesty ; neither is this done by women of inferiour quality, but we have here a young princess, bathing, anointing, and cloathing the

O'er his fair limbs a flow'ry vest he threw,
 And issu'd, like a God, to mortal view.
 His former feat beside the king he found,
 (His people's father with his peers around)
 All plac'd at ease the holy banquet join, 600
 And in the dazzling goblet laughs the wine.

The rage of thirst and hunger now suppress,
 The monarch turns him to his royal guest;
 And for the promis'd journey bids prepare
 The smooth-hair'd horses, and the rapid car. 605
 Observant of his word; the word scarce spoke,
 The sons obey, and join them to the yoke.
 Then bread and wine a ready handmaid brings,
 And presents, such as suit the state of kings.
 The glitt'ring seat Telemachus ascends; 610
 His faithful guide Pisistratus attends;

naked Telemachus. Eustathius indeed tells us, it was undoubtedly by her father's command: but if it was a piece of immodesty, it does not solve the objection, whoever commanded it. I confess it would be immodest in these ages of the world, and the only excuse that occurs to me is, to say that custom established it. It is in manners, in some degree, as in dress; if a fashion never so indecent prevails, yet no person is ridiculous, because it is fashionable: so in manners, if a practice prevails universally, though not reconcilable to real modesty, yet no person can be said to be immodest who comes into it, because it is agreeable to the custom of the times and countries.

v. 610, &c. *The conclusion of the book*] I shall lay together what I have further to observe on the conclusion of this book: it is remarkable, that the poet does not amuse

With hasty hand the ruling reins he drew :
 He lash'd the courfers, and the courfers flew.
 Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held
 Their equal pace, and smok'd along the field. 615

himself in describing the present Telemachus received from Nestor, or the provisions for the journey, or even the journey itself at large ; he dispatches the whole in a few lines very judiciously ; he carries his hero directly to Menelaus, who is to furnish many incidents that contribute to the design of the poem, and passes over other matters as unnecessary.

We have likewise a piece of poetical geography, and learn that it is exactly two days journey from Pyle to Lacedæmon.

This book takes up three days ; the first is spent in the inquiries Telemachus makes of Nestor concerning Ulysses ; the two last in the morning sacrifice at Pylos, and in the journey of Telemachus to Lacedæmon ; so that five days have now passed since the opening of the poem. I have said nothing about the sacrifice, though it be the most exact description of the sacrifices, as practised by the ancients, perhaps extant in any author ; I refer to the observations upon the first book of the Iliad.

I would here remark that the three first books are written with the utmost simplicity, there has been no room for such exalted strokes of poetry as are to be found in the Iliad, or in the future parts of the Odyssey : but this is not owing to the decay of genius in Homer, as some criticks have affirmed, (who look upon the Odyssey as bearing marks of his declining years) but to the nature of the subject. The characters of Achilles and Ulysses are both very great, but very different. The Iliad consists of battles and a continual commotion ; the Odyssey in patience and wisdom : and consequently the style of the two poems must be as different as the characters of the two

Book III. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 143

The tow'rs of Pylos sink, its views decay,
Fields after fields fly back, 'till close of day :
Then sunk the sun, and darken'd all the way. }

To Phææ now, Diocleus' stately feat,
(Of Alpheus's race) the weary youths retreat. 620

His house affords the hospitable rite,
And pleas'd they sleep (the blessing of the night.)

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn ;

Again they mount, their journey to renew, 625
And from the founding portico they flew.

Along the waving fields their way they hold,
The fields receding as the chariot roll'd :

Then slowly sunk the ruddy globe of light,
And o'er the shaded landscape rush'd the night. 630

heroes. A noble fountain of poetry opens in the next book, and flows with an uninterrupted course almost through the whole *Odyssey*.

THE
FOURTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

VOL. I.

L

THE
A R G U M E N T.

The Conference with Menelaus.

TELEMACHUS with Pisistratus arriving at Sparta, is hospitably received by Menelaus, to whom he relates the cause of his coming, and learns from him many particulars of what befel the Greeks since the destruction of Troy. He dwells more at large upon the prophecies of Proteus to him in his return, from which he acquaints Telemachus, that Ulysses is detained in the island of Calypso.

In the meantime the suitors consult to destroy Telemachus in his voyage home. Penelope is apprized of this, but comforted in a dream by Pallas, in the shape of her sister Iphima.

THE
* FOURTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

AND now proud Sparta with their wheels re-
ounds,
Sparta whose walls a range of hills furrounds :
At the fair dome the rapid labour ends ;
Where fat Atrides 'midst his bridal friends,
With double vows invoking Hymen's pow'r, 5
To blefs his fons and daughters nuptial hour.

* Aristotle in his Poeticks reports, that certain ancient criticks reproached Homer for an indecency in making Telemachus take his abode with Menelaus, and not with his own grandfather Icarius : this Monsieur Dacier sufficiently answers, by shewing that Icarius had settled himself in Acarnania, and not in Lacedæmon.

v. 5. — *invoking Hymen's pow'r.*] Athenæus has been very severe upon this passage, as Eustathius observes, and Dacier from Eustathius.

Aristarchus, says Athenæus, misguides us, the words τὸν δ' εἶγον δαίμονα led him into an error ; whereas the marriage is completed, the wedded couple gone away from Menelaus, and he and Helen at Lacedæmon. The

That day, to great Achilles' son resign'd,
Hermione, the fairest of her kind,

five verses, continues he, (the fifteenth to the twentieth inclusively in the Greek) are taken from the eighteenth book of the Iliad, and inserted very improperly in this place by Aristarchus. Athenæus gives several reasons for his opinion, as that musick and dancing were very contrary to the severe manners of the Lacedæmonians; besides the dance was a Cretan dance, how then could it be practised among the Spartans? The poet mentions neither the name of the bard, nor one word of the subject of the songs: neither can the words *μολπῆς ἐξάρχοντες* be applied at all to the dancers, but to the musicians; and lastly, it is not to be imagined that Telemachus and Pisistratus should be so unpolite, as not to be at all affected with the musick, had there been any, and yet break out into such wonder at the sight of the beauty of the palace of Menelaus. Aristarchus, adds he, thought the description of the wedding of the son and daughter of a king was too meanly and concisely described, and therefore made this addition.

But it is easy to refute Athenæus, and vindicate Aristarchus. Athenæus understood *πέμπε* and *ἤγειο* in the wrong sense, they are of the imperfect, *he was sending*, or *about to send*, and not *had sent*, &c. If the marriage had been absolutely finished, why should Minerva absent herself from Menelaus, when the celebration of the nuptial is the only reason of the absence of that Goddess? And as for musick and dancing being contrary to the severe manners of the Lacedæmons, this is all conjecture: Menelaus lived more than three hundred years before Lycurgus; and because such diversions were forbid in Sparta in the days of Lycurgus, must it follow that they were not used in those of Menelaus? And should it be granted that musick and dancing were not used in his times, might he not relax a little from the severity of his times, upon such an

Was sent to crown the long protracted joy,
 Espous'd before the final doom of Troy : 10
 With steeds and gilded cars, a gorgeous train
 Attend the nymph to Phthia's distant reign.
 Meanwhile at home, to Megapenthes' bed
 The virgin choir Alektor's daughter led.

occasion of joy as the marriage of a son and daughter ? I am sure these diversions are not more contrary to the severity of the Spartans, than the magnificence of the palace of Menelaus was to their simplicity. " But he does " not name the bard, or the subject of his songs." But is this a reason why the verses are spurious ? We should rather admire the judgment of the poet, who having so fair an opportunity to describe these nuptials, yet rejects the temptation, dismisses the whole in a few lines, and follows where his subject leads him. The objection about the dance being Cretan is not more valid : Menelaus (as we may learn from the preceding book) had been in Crete, and might bring it thence to Lacedæmon. And as for the criticism upon ἐξάχοντες, it is but a fallacy ; Casaubon has shewn beyond contradiction, that ἐξάχειν is applied indifferently to all those who give example to others ; and consequently may be applied to dancers as well as musicians. It may be further added, that although it should be allowed that the word ἐξάχειν is only properly applied to musick, yet in this place the word would not be improperly applied to dancers ; for the dancers, without usurping upon the province of the singer, might μόλις ἐξάχειν, or chuse those songs, to which they desired to dance, as is the usage at this day.

Diodorus is of opinion, that the whole twelve lines after the second to the fifteenth are not genuine ; but what has been said of Athenæus, may be applied to Diodorus.

150 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

Brave Megapenthes, from a stol'n amour 15
 To great Atrides' age his hand-maid bore:
 To Helen's bed the Gods alone assign
 Hermione, t' extend the regal line ;
 On whom a radiant pomp of graces wait,
 Resembling Venus in attractive state. 20

While this gay friendly troop the king surround,
 With festival and mirth the roofs resound :
 A bard amid the joyous circle sings
 High airs, attemper'd to the vocal strings ;
 Whilst warbling to the varied strain, advance 25
 Two sprightly youths to form the bounding dance.
 'Twas then, that issuing thro' the palace gate
 The splendid car roll'd slow in regal state :
 On the bright eminence young Nestor shone,
 And fast beside him great Ulysses' son : 30
 Grave Eteoneus saw the pomp appear,
 And speeding, thus address'd the royal ear.

Two youths approach, whose semblant features
 prove

Their blood devolving from the source of Jove.

Is due reception deign'd, or must they bend 35
 Their doubtful course to seek a distant friend ?

Insensate ! (with a sigh the king replies)

Too long, mis-judging, have I thought thee wise :

v. 37. *Menelaus blames Eteoneus.*] This is the first appearance of Menelaus ; and surely nothing can more reconcile him to the favour of the spectators, than those amiable colours in which the poet paints him. There is

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 151

But sure relentless folly steels thy breast,
Obdurate to reject the stranger-guest ; 40
To those dear hospitable rites a foe,
Which in my wand'rings oft' reliev'd my woe :
Fed by the bounty of another's board,
'Till pitying Jove my native realm restor'd—
Straight be the courfers from the car releas't, 45
Conduct the youths to grace the genial feast.

The seneschal rebuk'd in haste withdrew ;
With equal haste a menial train pursue :
Part led the courfers, from the car enlarg'd,
Each to a crib with choicest grain furcharg'd ; 50
Part in a portico, profusely grac'd
With rich magnificence, the chariot plac'd :
Then to the dome the friendly pair invite,
Who eye the dazzling roofs with vast delight ;
Resplendent as the blaze of summer-noon, 55
Or the pale radiance of the midnight moon.
From room to room their eager view they bend ;
Thence to the bath, a beauteous pile, descend ;
Where a bright damsel-train attend the guests
With liquid odours, and embroider'd vests. 60

an overflow of humanity and gratitude in his expressions,
like that of Dido in Virgil,

“ Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.”

They contain a fine piece of morality, and teach that those
men are more tender-hearted and humane who have felt
the reverse of fortune, than those who have only lived in
a condition of prosperity.

Refresh'd, they wait them to the bow'r of state,
 Where circled with his peers Atrides sat :
 Thron'd next the king, a fair attendant brings
 The purest product of the crystal springs ;
 High on a massy vase of silver mold, 65
 The burnish'd laver flames with solid gold ;
 In solid gold the purple vintage flows,
 And on the board a second banquet rose.
 When thus the king with hospitable port :—
 Accept this welcome to the Spartan court ; 70
 The waste of nature let the feast repair,
 Then your high lineage and your names declare :
 Say from what scepter'd ancestry ye claim,
 Recorded eminent in deathless fame ?
 For vulgar parents cannot stamp their race 75
 With signatures of such majestick grace.
 Ceasing, benevolent he straight assigns
 The royal portion of the choicest chine
 To each accepted friend : with grateful haste
 They share the honours of the rich repast. 80
 Suffic'd, soft-whispering thus to Nestor's son,
 His head reclin'd, young Ithacus begun.

v. 81. *Soft whispering thus to Nestor's son.*] This may be
 thought a circumstance of no importance, and very trivial
 in Telemachus ; but it shews his address and decency : he
 whispers, to avoid the appearance of a flatterer, or to
 conceal his own inexperience, in shewing too much
 surprise at the magnificence of the palace of Menelaus.
Eustathius.

View'st thou unmov'd, O ever-honour'd most !
 These prodigies of art, and wond'rous cost !
 Above, beneath, around the palace shines 85
 The sumless treasure of exhausted mines :
 The spoils of elephants the roofs inlay,
 And studded amber darts a golden ray :
 Such, and not nobler, in the realms above
 My wonder dictates is the dome of Jove. 90

The monarch took the word, and grave reply'd.
 Presumptuous are the vaunts, and vain the pride

v. 91. *The monarch took the word, &c.*] The ancients, says Eustathius, observe the prudence of Menelaus, in his reply to Telemachus ; and the prudence of Telemachus in his behaviour to Menelaus : Menelaus denies not his riches and magnificence ; but to take off the envy which they might attract, he throws the calamities he has undergone into the contrary scale, and balances his felicity with his misfortunes : and Telemachus coming into the palace at the time of an entertainment, chuses to satisfy his curiosity rather than his appetite. Plutarch, I confess, condemns Telemachus of inexperience ; who when he saw the palace of Nestor furnished only with things useful to life, as beds, tables, &c. is seized with no admiration ; but the superfluities of Menelaus, his ivory, amber, and gold, &c. carry him into transports : whereas a Socrates or a Diogenes would have exclaimed, What heaps of vanities have I beheld ! It is true, such a judgment might become philosophers ; but who, as Dacier observes, can think the character of a Socrates or a Diogenes suitable to young Telemachus ? What is decent in a prince, and a young man, would ill become the gravity and wisdom of a philosopher.

Of man, who dares in pomp with Jove contest,
 Unchang'd, immortal, and supremely blest!
 With all my affluence when my woes are weigh'd,
 Envy will own, the purchase dearly paid. 96
 For eight flow-circling years by tempest tost,
 From Cyprus to the far Phœnician coast,
 (Sidon the capital) I stretch'd my toil
 Thro' regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile. 100
 Next, Æthiopia's utmost bound explore,
 And the parch'd borders of th' Arabian shore:
 Then warp my voyage on the southern gales,
 O'er the warm Libyan wave to spread my sails:
 That happy clime! where each revolving year 105
 The teeming ewes a triple offspring bear;

v. 100. *Thro' regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile.*
Next, Æthiopia, &c.]

The words are in the original Αἰγυπλίους ἐπαλήθεις, others read them Αἰγυπλίους ἐπ' ἀληθείας, from their veracity in oracles, for which they were very famous; and indeed the word ἐπαλήθεις is not necessary, it being used in the very same sentence, though it must be confessed such repetitions are frequent in Homer. There is also a different reading of the word ἐρέμους: some have it ἐρέμους, or *Blacks*; others, Ζιδονίους Ἀράβας τε; but the common reading is thought the best. The Erembi are the Arabian Troglodytes. Strabo informs us, that in former ages the bounds of the Æthiopians lay near to Thebes in Ægypt, so that Menelaus travelling to Thebes, might with ease visit the Æthiopians. Others have without any foundation imagined that he passed the straits of Gibraltar, and sailed to the Indies. Sidon is the capital of the Phœnicians. *Eustathius.*

And two fair crescents of translucent horn
 The brows of all their young increase adorn :
 The shepherd swains with sure abundance blest,
 On the fat flock and rural dainties feast; 110
 Nor want of herbage makes the dairy fail,
 But every season fills the foaming pail.
 Whilst heaping unwish'd wealth, I distant roam;
 The best of brothers, at his natal home,

v. 105. — — — *Where each revolving year
 The teeming ewes, &c.]*

These sheep, as described by Homer, may be thought the creation of the poet, and not the production of nature : but Herodotus, says Eustathius, writes, that in Scythia the oxen have no horns through the extremity of the cold : he quotes this very verse, rightly intimating, adds Herodotus, that in hot regions the horns of cattle shoot very speedily. Aristotle directly asserts, that in Libya the young ones of horned cattle have horns immediately after they are brought into the world. So that Aristotle and Herodotus vindicate Homer. The poet adds, that the sheep breed three times in the year ; these words may have a different interpretation, and imply that they breed in three seasons of the year, and not only in the spring, as in other countries ; or that the sheep have at once three lambs ; but the first is the better interpretation. Athenæus upon this passage writes, that there are things in other countries no less strange than what Homer relates of these sheep of Libya. Thus in Lusitania, a country of Spain, now Portugal, there is a wonderful fruitfulness in all cattle, by reason of the excellent temper of the air ; the fruits there never rot, and the roses, violets and asparagus, never fail above three months in the year. *Eustathius.*

By the dire fury of a traitress wife, 115
 Ends the sad evening of a stormy life :
 Whence with incessant grief my soul annoy'd,
 These riches are possess'd, but not enjoy'd!
 My wars, the copious theme of ev'ry tongue,
 To you, your fathers have recorded long : 120

v. 114. *The best of brothers,——
 —— a traitress wife.]*

Menelaus neither mentions Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, nor Ægythus by name : a just indignation and resentment is the occasion of his suppressing the names of Clytemnestra and Ægythus. Through the whole Iliad Menelaus is described as a very affectionate brother, and the love he bears Agamemnon is the reason why he passes by his name in silence. We see that he despatches the whole in one verse and a half ; Nestor had told the story pretty largely in the preceding book, and as he was a person less nearly concerned, might speak of it with more ease and better temper than Menelaus ; the poet avoids a needless repetition, and a repetition too of a story universally known to all the Greeks. The death of Agamemnon is distributed into four places in the Odyssey ; Nestor Menelaus, Proteus, and the shade of Agamemnon in the eleventh book, all relate it, and every one very properly. Proteus as a prophet more fully than them all, as being best acquainted with it. *Eustathius.*

v. 119. *My wars, the copious theme, &c.]* In the original Menelaus says, *I have destroyed a house, &c.* There is an ambiguity in the expression, as Eustathius observes : for it may either signify the *house* of Priam, or his own in *Argos* ; if it be understood of his own, then the meaning is, “ I have indeed great wealth, but have purchased it

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 157

How fav'ring heav'n repaid my glorious toils
 With a sack'd palace, and barbarick spoils.
 Oh! had the Gods so large a boon deny'd,
 And life, the just equivalent, supply'd 124
 To those brave warriors, who with glory fir'd,
 Far from their country in my cause expir'd!
 Still in short intervals of pleasing woe,
 Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,
 I to the glorious dead, for ever dear!
 Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear. 130
 But oh! Ulysses—deeper than the rest
 That sad idea wounds my anxious breast!

“ with the loss of my people; I could be content with the
 “ third part of it, if I could restore those to life who have
 “ perished before Troy.” If it be understood of the
 kingdom of Priam, the regret he shews will still appear
 the greater. He is enumerating his domestick happiness,
 and his foreign conquest of Troy; but he throws the de-
 struction of so many brave men who fell before it, in the
 contrary scale: and it so far outweighs both his wealth
 and his glory, that they are both joyless to him. Either
 of these interpretations shew an excellent temper of hu-
 manity in Menelaus, who thinks the effusion of blood too
 dear a price for glory. At the same time the poet gives an
 admirable picture of human nature, which is restless in
 the pursuit of what it miscalls happiness, and when in pos-
 session of it, neglects it. But the disquiet of Menelaus
 arises not from inconstancy of temper, but wisdom; it
 shews that all happiness is unsatisfactory.

v. 131. *But oh! Ulysses— &c.*] It is with admirable ad-
 dress that the poet falls into his subject: it is art, but it
 seems to be nature: this conduct has a double effect, it

158 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

My heart bleeds fresh with agonizing pain ;
The bowl, and tasteful viands tempt in vain,
Nor sleep's soft pow'r can close my streaming
eyes, 135

When imag'd to my soul his sorrows rise.
No peril in my cause he ceas'd to prove,
His labours equall'd only by my love :
And both alike to bitter fortune born,
For him, to suffer, and for me to mourn ! 140
Whether he wanders on some friendly coast,
Or glides in Stygian gloom a pensive ghost,
No fame reveals ; but doubtful of his doom,
His good old fire with sorrow to the tomb
Declines his trembling steps ; untimely care 145
Withers the blooming vigour of his heir ;
And the chaste partner of his bed and throne,
Wastes all her widow'd hours in tender moan.

takes away all suspicion of flattery, for Menelaus is ignorant that the person with whom he discourses is Telemachus ; this gives him a manifest evidence of the love he bears to Ulysses ; the young man could not but be pleased with the praise of his father, and with the sincerity of it. It is also observable, that Menelaus builds his friendship for Ulysses upon a noble foundation ; I mean the sufferings which Ulysses underwent for his friend : Menelaus ascribes not their affection to any familiarity or intercourse of entertainments, but to a more sincere cause, to the hazards which brave men undertake for a friend. In short, the friendship of Menelaus and Ulysses is the friendship of heroes. *Eustathius.*

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 159

While thus pathetick to the prince he spoke:
From the brave youth the streaming passion
broke: 150

Studious to veil the grief, in vain repress,
His face he shrouded with his purple vest:
The conscious monarch pierc'd the coy disguise,
And view'd his filial love with vast surprise:
Dubious to press the tender theme, or wait 155
To hear the youth enquire his father's fate.

In this suspense bright Helen grac'd the room;
Before her breath'd a gale of rich perfume,

V. 157. — — — — *bright Helen grac'd the room.*] Menelaus conjectured that the person he had entertained was the son of Ulysses, from the tears he shed at the name of his father, and the resemblance there was between Ulysses and Telemachus; it might therefore have been expected that Menelaus should immediately have acknowledged Telemachus, and not delayed a full discovery one moment, out of regard to his absent friend; but Menelaus defers it upon a two-fold account, to give some time to Telemachus to indulge his sorrow for his father, and recover himself from it, and also to avoid the repetition of a discovery upon the appearance of Helen, who would be curious to know the condition of the strangers.

It may be necessary to say something concerning Helen, that fatal beauty that engaged Greece and Asia in arms; she is drawn in the same colours in the Odyssey as in the Iliad; it is a vicious character; but the colours are so admirably softened by the art of the poet, that we pardon her infidelity. Menelaus is an uncommon instance of conjugal affection; he forgives a wife who had been false to him, and receives her into a full degree of favour. But perhaps the reader might have been shocked at it, and

160 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

So moves, adorn'd with each attractive grace,
 The silver-shafted Goddess of the chace ! 160
 The feat of majesty Adraſte brings,
 With art illuſtrious, for the pomp of kings.
 To ſpread the pall (beneath the regal chair)
 Of ſoſteſt woof, is bright Alcippe's care.
 A ſilver caniſter divinely wrought, 165
 In her ſoft hands the beauteous Phylo brought :
 To Sparta's queen of old the radiant vaſe
 Alcandria gave, a pledge of royal grace :
 For Polybus her lord, (whoſe ſov'reign ſway
 The wealthy tribes of Pharian Thebes obey) 170
 When to that court Atrides came, careſt
 With vaſt munificence th' imperial gueſt :
 Two lavers from the richeſt ore refin'd,
 With ſilver tripods, the kind hoſt aſſign'd ;
 And bounteous, from the royal treaſure told 175
 Ten equal talents of refulgent gold.

prejudiced againſt Helen as a perſon that ought to be forgot, or have her name only mentioned to diſgrace it: the poet therefore, to reconcile her to his reader, brings her in as a penitent, condemning her own infidelity in very ſtrong expreſſions; ſhe ſhews true modeſty, when ſhe calls herſelf impudent, and by this conduct we are inclined, like Menelaus, to forgive her.

v. 161, &c. *Adraſte, Alcippe, Helen's maids.*] It has been obſerved, that Helen has not the ſame attendants in the *Odyssey* as ſhe had in the *Iliad*; they perhaps might be Trojans, and conſequently be left in their own country: or rather, it was an act of prudence in Menelaus not to ſuffer thoſe ſervants about her who had been her attendants and confidents in her infidelity. *Euſtathius.*

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 161

Alcandra, consort of his high command,
A golden distaff gave to Helen's hand ;
And that rich vase, with living sculpture wrought,
Which heap'd with wool the beauteous Phylo
brought : 180

The filken fleece impurpl'd for the loom,
Rival'd the hyacinth in vernal bloom.
The sovereign seat then Jove-born Helen prefs'd,
And pleasing thus her scepter'd lord address'd.

Who grace our palace now, that friendly pair, 185
Speak they their lineage, or their names declare?
Uncertain of the truth, yet uncontroll'd
Hear me the bodings of my breast unfold.
With wonder wrapt, on yonder cheek I trace
The feature of the Ulyssæan race : 190
Diffus'd o'er each resembling line appear,
In just similitude, the grace and air
Of young Telemachus! the lovely boy,
Who blest'd Ulysses with a father's joy,

v. 192. — — — — *the grace and air*
Of young Telemachus ! — —]

It may seem strange that Helen should at first view recollect the features of Ulysses in Telemachus ; and that Menelaus, who was better acquainted with him, and his constant friend, should not make the same observation. But Athenæus, to reconcile this to probability, says, that women are curious and skilful observers of the likeness of children to parents, for one particular reason, that they may, upon finding any dissimilitude, have the pleasure of hinting at the unchastity of others.

What-time the Greeks combin'd their social
arms, 195

T'avenge the stain of my ill-fated charms!

Just is thy thought, the king assenting cries,
Methinks Ulysses strikes my wond'ring eyes:

Full shines the father in the filial frame,

His port, his features, and his shape the same: 200

Such quick regards his sparkling eyes bestow;

Such wavy ringlets o'er his shoulders flow!

And when he heard the long disastrous store

Of cares, which in my cause Ulysses bore;

Dismay'd, heart-wounded with paternal woes, 205

Above restraint the tide of sorrow rose:

Cautious to let the gushing grief appear,

His purple garment veil'd the falling tear.

See there confest, Pisistratus replies,

The genuine worth of Ithacus the wife! 210

Of that heroick fire the youth is sprung,

But modest awe hath chain'd his tim'rous tongue.

Thy voice, O king! with pleas'd attention heard,

Is like the dictates of a God rever'd.

With him at Nestor's high command I came, 215

Whose age I honour with a parent's name.

By adverse destiny constrain'd to sue

For counsel and redress, he sues to you.

Whatever ill the friendless orphan bears,

Bereav'd of parents in his infant years, 220

Still must the wrong'd Telemachus sustain,

If hopeful of your aid, he hopes in vain:

Book IV. HÔMER'S ODYSSEY. 163

Affianc'd in your friendly pow'r alone,
 The youth wou'd vindicate the vacant throne.
 Is Sparta blest, and these desiring eyes 225
 View my friend's son ? (the king exulting cries)
 Son of my friend, by glorious toils approv'd,
 Whose sword was sacred to the man he lov'd :
 Mirrour of constant faith, rever'd, and mourn'd !—
 When Troy was ruin'd, had the chief return'd, 230
 No Greek an equal space had e'er possess'd,
 Of dear affection in my grateful breast.
 I, to confirm the mutual joys we shar'd,
 For his abode a capital prepar'd ;
 Argos the seat of sov'reign rule I chose ; 235
 Fair in the plan the future palace rose,
 Where my Ulysses and his race might reign,
 And portion to his tribes the wide domain.
 To them my vassals had resign'd a foil,
 With teeming plenty to reward their toil. 240
 There with commutual zeal we both had strove
 In acts of dear benevolence, and love :
 Brothers in peace, not rivals in command,
 And death alone dissolv'd the friendly band !

v. 234. *For his abode a capital prepar'd.*] The poet puts these words in the mouth of Menelaus, to express the sincerity of his friendship to Ulysses : he intended him all advantage, and no detriment : we must therefore conclude, that Ulysses was still to retain his sovereignty over Ithaca, and only remove to Argos, to live with so sincere a friend as Menelaus. *Eustathius.*

Some envious Pow'r the blissful scene destroys ;
 Vanish'd are all the visionary joys : 246
 The soul of friendship to my hope is lost,
 Fated to wander from his natal coast !

He ceas'd ; a gust of grief began to rise :
 Fast streams a tide from beauteous Helen's eyes ;
 Fast for the fire the filial sorrows flow ; 251
 The weeping monarch swells the mighty woe :
 Thy cheeks, Pisistratus, the tears bedew,
 While pictur'd to thy mind appear'd in view
 Thy martial* brother : on the Phrygian plain 255
 Extended pale, by swarthy Memnon slain !
 But silence soon the son of Nestor broke,
 And melting with fraternal pity spoke.

v. 249. — — — *a gust of grief began to rise, &c.*] It has been observed through the Iliad, and may be observed through the whole Odyssey, that it was not a disgrace to the greatest heroes to shed tears ; and indeed I cannot see why it should be an honour to any man, to be able to divest himself of human nature so far as to appear insensible upon the most affecting occasions. No man is born a stoick : it is art, not nature ; tears are only a shame when the cause from whence they flow is mean and vicious. Here Menelaus laments a friend, Telemachus a father, Pisistratus a brother : but from what cause arise the tears of Helen ? It is to be remembered that Helen is drawn in the softest colours in the Odyssey : the character of the adulteress is lost in that of the penitent : the name of Ulysses throws her into tears, because she is the occasion of all the sufferings of that brave man ; the poet makes her the first in sorrow, as she is the cause of all their tears.

* Antilochus.

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 165

Frequent, O king, was Nestor wont to raise
 And charm attention with thy copious praise : 260
 To crown thy various gifts, the sage assign'd
 The glory of a firm capacious mind :
 With that superiour attribute controul
 This unavailing impotence of soul.
 Let not your roof with echoing grief resound, 265
 Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd:
 But when from dewy shade emerging bright,
 Aurora streaks the sky with orient light,
 Let each deplore his dead: the rites of woe
 Are all, alas ! the living can bestow : 270
 O'er the congenial dust injoin'd to shear
 The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear.

v. 265. *Let not your roof with echoing grief resound,
 Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd.]*

It may be asked why sorrow for the dead should be more unseasonable in the evening than the morning? Eustathius answers, lest others should look upon our evening tears as the effect of wine, and not of love to the dead.

“ Intempestivus venit inter pocula fletus,
 “ Nec lacrymas dulci fas est miscere falerno.”

I fancy there may be a more rational account given of this expression: the time of feasting was ever looked upon as a time of joy and thanksgiving to the Gods; it bore a religious veneration among the ancients, and consequently to shed tears when they should express their gratitude to the Gods with joy, was esteemed a profanation.

166 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

Then mingling in the mournful pomp with you,
 I'll pay my brother's ghost a warriour's due,
 And mourn the brave Antilochus, a name 275
 Not unrecorded in the rolls of fame :

With strength and speed superiour form'd, in fight
 To face the foe, or intercept his flight :
 Too early snatch'd by fate ere known to me !
 I boast a witness of his worth in thee. 280

Young and mature ! the monarch thus rejoins,
 In thee renew'd the soul of Nestor shines :
 Form'd by the care of that consummate sage,
 In early bloom an oracle of age.

Whene'er his influence Jove vouchsafes to show'r
 To bless the natal, and the nuptial hour ; 286
 From the great fire transmissible to the race,
 The boon devolving gives distinguish'd grace.
 Such, happy Nestor ! was thy glorious doom ;
 Around thee full of years, thy offspring bloom,
 Expert of arms, and prudent in debate ; 291

The gifts of heav'n to guard thy hoary state.
 But now let each becalm his troubled breast,
 Wash, and partake serene the friendly feast.
 To move thy suit, Telemachus, delay, 295
 'Till heav'n's revolving lamp restores the day.

He said, Asphalion swift the laver brings ;
 Alternate all partake the grateful springs :
 Then from the rites of purity repair,
 And with keen gust the sav'ry viands share. 300

Meantime with genial joy to warm the soul,
Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl:

v. 302. *Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl, &c.*] The conjectures about this cordial of Helen have been almost infinite. Some take Nepenthes allegorically, to signify history, music, or philosophy. Plutarch in the first of the Symposiacks affirms it to be, discourse well suiting the present passions and conditions of the hearers. Macrobius is of the same opinion, *Delinimentum illud quod Helena vino miscuit, non herba fuit, non ex Indiâ succus, sed narrandi opportunitas, quæ hospitum mœroris oblitum flexit ad gaudium*. What gave a foundation to this fiction of Homer, as Dacier observes, might be this, Diodorous writes that in Ægypt, and chiefly at Heliopolis, the same with Thebes, where Menelaus sojourned, as has been already observed, there lived women who boasted of certain potions, which not only made the unfortunate forget all their calamities, but drove away the most violent sallies of grief or anger. Eusebius directly affirms, that even in his time the women of Diospolis were able to calm the rage of grief or anger with certain potions. Now whether this be truth or fiction, it fully vindicates Homer, since a poet may make use of a prevailing, though false opinion.

Milton mentions this Nepenthes in his excellent masque of Comus.

— — — Behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in the crystal bounds!
Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such pow'r as this to stir up joy,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.

But that there may be something more than fiction in this is very probable, since the Ægyptians were so notorious

Temper'd with drugs of sov'reign use, t' assuage
 The boiling bosom of tumultuous rage ;
 To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled Care, 305
 And dry the tearful fluices of Despair :

skilled in physick ; and particularly since this very Thon, or Thonis, or Thoon, is reported by the ancients to have been the inventor of physick among the Ægyptians. The description of this Nepenthes agrees admirably with what we know of the qualities and effects of Opium.

It is further said of Thon, that he was king of Canopus, and entertained Menelaus hospitably before he had seen Helen ; but afterwards falling in love with her, and offering violence, he was slain by Menelaus. From his name the Ægyptians gave the name of Thoth to the first month of their year, and also to a city the name of Thonis. Ælian writes, that Menelaus, when he travelled to the Æthiopians, committed Helen to the protection of Thonis ; that she fell in love with him, that Polydamna growing jealous confined her to the island of Pharos, but gave her an herb to preserve her from the poison of serpents, there frequent, which from Helen was called Helenium. Strabo writes, that at Canopus, on the mouth of the Nile, there stands a city named Thonies, from king Thonis, who received Helen and Menelaus. Herodotus relates, that Thonis was governour of Canopus, that he represented the injury which Paris had done to Menelaus, to Proteus who reigned in Memphis. *Eustathius.*

This last remark from Herodotus is sufficient to shew, that Homer is not so fictitious as is generally imagined, that there really was a king named Proteus, that the poet builds his fables upon truth, and that it was truth that originally determined Homer to introduce Proteus into his poetry ; but I intend to explain this more largely in the story of Proteus.

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 169

Charm'd with that virtuous draught, th' exalted mind
All sense of woe delivers to the wind.

Tho' on the blazing pile his parent lay,
Or a lov'd brother groan'd his life away, 310

Or darling son, oppress'd by ruffian-force,
Fell breathless at his feet, a mangled corse ;

Form morn to eve, impassive and serene,
The man entranc'd would view the deathful scene.

These drugs, so friendly to the joys of life, 315

Bright Helen learn'd from Thone's imperial wife ;

Who sway'd the scepter, where prolific Nile

With various simples clothes the fat'ned soil:

With wholesome herbage mix'd, the direful bane

Of vegetable venom, taints the plain ; 320

From Pæon sprung, their patron-god imparts

To all the Pharian race his healing arts.

The bev'rage now prepar'd t' inspire the feast,

The circle thus the beauteous queen address.

Thron'd in omnipotence, supremest Jove 325

Tempers the fates of human race above ;

By the firm sanction of his sov'reign will,

Alternate are decreed our good and ill.

To feastful mirth be this white hour assign'd,

And sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind. 330

Myself assisting in the social joy,

Will tell Ulysses' bold exploit in Troy :

v. 331. *Myself* — — — —

Will tell Ulysses' bold exploit — —]

What is here related shews the necessity of the introduction
of Helen, and the use the poet makes of it: she is not brought

Sole witness of the deed I now declare ;
 Speak you (who saw) his wonders in the war.

Seam'd o'er with wounds, which his own fabre
 gave, 335

In the vile habit of a village-slave,

in merely as a *muta persona*, to fill up the number of persons ; but she relates several incidents, in which she herself was concerned, and which she could only know ; and consequently not only diversifies, but carries on the design of the story. *Eustathius*.

v. 335. *Seam'd o'er with wounds, &c.*] The poet here shews his judgment in passing over many instances of the sufferings of Ulysses, and relating this piece of conduct, not mentioned by any other author. The art of Ulysses in extricating himself from difficulties is laid down as the ground-work of the poem, he is πολύτροπος, and this is an excellent example of it. This further shews the necessity of the appearance of Helen, no other person being acquainted with the story. If this stratagem be not a reality, yet it bears the resemblance of it ; and Megabyzus the Persian (as Eustathius observes) practised it, as we learn from history. We may reasonably conjecture that Ulysses was committed to Helen, in hopes that he would discover the affairs of the army more freely to her than any other person ; for what could be more agreeable to a Greek, than to be committed to the care of a Greek, as Ulysses was to Helen ? By the same conduct the poet raises the character of Helen, by making her shew her repentance by an act of generosity to her countryman. The original says she gave an oath to Ulysses not to discover him before he was in safety in the Grecian army : now this does not imply that she ever discovered to the Trojans that Ulysses had entered Troy : the contrary opinion is most probable ; for it cannot be imagined but all Troy must have been

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 171

The foe deceiv'd, he pass'd the tented plain,
 In Troy to mingle with the hostile train.
 In this attire securé from searching eyes,
 'Till haply piercing thro' the dark disguise 340
 The chief I challeng'd; he, whose practis'd wit
 Knew all the serpent-mazes of deceit,
 Eludes my search: but when his form I view'd
 Fresh from the bath with fragrant oils renew'd,
 His limbs in military purple dress'd; 345
 Each brightning grace the genuine Greek confess'd.
 A previous pledge of sacred faith obtain'd,
 'Till he the lines and Argive fleet regain'd,
 To keep his stay conceal'd; the chief declar'd
 The plans of war against the town prepar'd. 350
 Exploring then the secrets of the state,
 He learn'd what best might urge the Dardan fate:

incens'd greatly against her, had they known that she had conceal'd one of their mortal enemies, and dismissed him in safety: it was sufficient for Ulysses to take her oath that she would not discover him, till he was in security: he left her future conduct to her own discretion. It is probable that she furnished Ulysses with a sword, for in his return he slew many Trojans: he came to Troy, observes Eustathius, in rags, and like a slave; and to have conceal'd a sword, would have endangered his life upon a discovery of it, and given strong suspicions of an impostor.

v. 351. *Exploring then the secrets of the state.*] The word *φρόνις* is here used in a large sense: it takes in all the observations Ulysses made during his continuance in Troy, it takes in the designs and counsels of the enemy, his measuring the gates, the height of the walls, the easiest place for an assault or ambush, the taking away the Palladium,

And safe returning to the Grecian host,
 Sent many a shade to Pluto's dreary coast.
 Loud grief resounded thro' the tow'rs of Troy, 355
 But my pleas'd bosom glow'd with secret joy :
 For then with dire remorse, and conscious shame,
 I view'd th' effects of that disastrous flame,
 Which kindled by th' imperious queen of love,
 Constrain'd me from my native realm to rove : 360
 And oft in bitterness of soul deplor'd
 My absent daughter, and my dearer lord ;
 Admir'd among the first of human race,
 For ev'ry gift of mind, and manly grace.

Right well, reply'd the king, your speech displays 365

The matchless merit of the chief you praise :

or whatever else a wise man may be supposed to observe, or act, in execution of such a stratagem. *Eustathius.*

v. 357. *For then with dire remorse, &c.]* The conclusion of this speech is very artful : Helen ascribes her seduction to Venus, and mentions nothing of Paris. Instead of naming Troy, she conceals it, and only says she was carried thither, leaving Troy to the imagination of Menelaus ; she suffers not herself to mention names so odious now to herself, and ever to Menelaus as Paris and Troy. She compliments Menelaus very handsomely, and says, that he wanted no accomplishment either in mind or body : it being the nature of man not to resent the injuries of a wife so much upon the account of her being corrupted, but of the preference she gives to another person ; he looks upon such a preference as the most affecting part of the injury. *Eustathius.*

v. 365. *Menelaus's answer.]* The judgment of the poet in continuing the story concerning Ulysses is not observed

Heroes, in various climes myself have found,
 For martial deeds, and depth of thought renown'd :
 But Ithacus, unrival'd in his claim,
 May boast a title to the loudest fame : 370
 In battle calm, he guides the rapid storm,
 Wise to resolve, and patient to perform.
 What wond'rous conduct in the chief appear'd,
 When the vast fabrick of the steed we rear'd !
 Some Dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom, 375
 Urg'd you with great Deiphobus to come,

by any commentator. Ulysses is the chief hero of the poem, every thing should have a reference to him, otherwise the narration stands still without any advance towards the conclusion of it. The poet therefore to keep Ulysses in our minds, dwells upon his sufferings and adventures : he supplies his not appearing in the present scene of action, by setting his character before us, and continually forcing his prudence, patience, and valour upon our observation. He uses the same art and judgment with relation to Achilles in the Iliad : the hero of the poem is absent from the chief scenes of action during much of the time which that poem comprises, but he is continually brought into the mind of the reader, by recounting his exploits and glory.

v. 375. *Some Dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom.*] It is the observation of Eustathius, that these words are very artfully introduced to vindicate Helen ; they imply that what she acted was by compulsion, and to evidence this more clearly, Deiphobus is given her for an attendant, as a spy upon her actions, that she might not conceal any thing that should happen, but act her part well, by endeavouring to deceive the Greeks in favour of Troy. It is the dæmon, not Helen, that is in fault ; this, continues Eustathius, answers many objections that lie against Helen :

T' explore the fraud ; with guile oppos'd to guile,
Slow-pacing thrice around th' insidious pile ;

for if she was a real penitent, as she herself affirms, how comes she to endeavour to deceive the Greeks by the disguise of her voice, into more misery than had yet arisen from a ten years war ? Or indeed is it credible that any person could modulate her voice so artfully as to resemble so many voices ? And how could the Greeks inclosed in the wooden horse believe that their wives who were in Greece, could be arrived in so short a space as they had been concealed there, from the various regions of Greece, and meet together in Troy ? Would the wives of these heroes come into an enemy's country, when the whole army, except these latent heroes, were retired from it ? this is ridiculous and impossible. I must confess there is great weight in these objections : but Eustathius answers all by the interposition of the dæmon ; and by an idle tradition that Helen had the name of Echo, from the faculty of mimicking sounds ; and that this gift was bestowed upon her by Venus when she married Menelaus, that she might be able to detect him, if he should prove false to her bed, by imitating the voice of the suspected person, (but Menelaus had more occasion for this faculty than Helen.) As for the excuse of the dæmon, it equally excuses all crimes : for instance, was Helen false to Menelaus ? The dæmon occasioned it : does she act an impostor to destroy all her Grecian friends, and even Menelaus ? The dæmon compels her to it : the dæmon compels her to go with Deiphobus, to surround the horse thrice, to sound the sides of it, to endeavour to surprise the latent Greeks by an imitation of the voices of their wives, and in short, to act like a person that was very sincere in mischief.

Dacier takes another course, and gives up Helen, but remarks the great address of Menelaus. Helen had, said she, long desired nothing so much as to return to Lacedæ-

Each noted leader's name you thrice invoke,
 Your accent varying as their spouses spoke : 380
 The pleasing sounds each latent warrior warm'd,
 But most Tydides' and my heart alarm'd :

mon ; and her heart had long been wholly turned to Menelaus : Menelaus is not at all convinced of this pretended sincerity ; but it would have been too gross, after he had taken her again to his bed, to convict her of falsehood : he therefore contents himself barely to reply, that some dæmon, an enemy to the Greeks, had forced her to a conduct disagreeable to her sincerity. This (continues Dacier) is an artful, but severe irony.

As for the objection concerning the impossibility of the Greeks believing their wives could be in Troy ; she answers, that the authors of this objection have not sufficiently considered human nature. The voice of a beloved person might of a sudden, and by surprise, draw from any person a word involuntary, before he has time to make reflection. This undoubtedly is true, where circumstances make an imposture probable ; but here is an impossibility ; it is utterly impossible to believe the wives of these heroes could be in Troy. Besides, Menelaus himself tells us, that even he had fallen into the snare, but Ulysses prevented it ; this adds to the incredibility of the story ; for if this faculty of mimicry was given upon his marriage with Helen, it was nothing new to him ; he must be supposed to be acquainted with it, and consequently be the less liable to surprise : nay it is not impossible, but the experiment might have been made upon him before Helen fled away with Paris.

In short, I think this passage wants a further vindication : the circumstances are low, if not incredible. Virgil, the great imitator of Homer, has given us a very different and more noble description of the destruction of Troy : he has not thought fit to imitate him in this description.

To quit the steed we both impatient press,
 Threat'ning to answer from the dark recess.
 Unmov'd the mind of Ithacus remain'd : 385
 And the vain ardours of our love restrain'd :
 But Anticlus unable to controul,
 Spoke loud the language of his yearning soul :
 Ulysses straight with indignation fir'd,
 (For so the common care of Greece requir'd) 390
 Firm to his lips his forceful hands apply'd,
 'Till on his tongue the flutt'ring murmurs dy'd.
 Meantime Minerva from the fraudulent horse,
 Back to the court of Priam bent your course.
 Inclement fate ! Telemachus replies, 395
 Frail is the boasted attribute of wise :
 The leader, mingling with the vulgar host,
 Is in the common mass of matter lost !
 But now let sleep the painful waste repair
 Of sad reflection, and corroding care. 400
 He ceas'd ; the menial fair that round her wait,
 At Helen's beck prepare the room of state ;

If we allow Helen to act by compulsion, to have feared the Trojans, and that Deiphobus was sent as a spy upon her actions ; yet this is no vindication of her conduct : she still acts a mean part, and through fear becomes an accomplice in endeavouring to betray and ruin the Greeks.

I shall just add, that after the death of Paris, Helen marries Deiphobus ; that the story of the wooden horse is probably founded upon the taking of Troy by an engine called a horse, as the like engine was called a ram by the Romans.

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Beneath an ample portico, they spread
The downy fleece to form the slumb'rous bed ;
And o'er soft palls of purple grain, unfold 405
Rich tapestry, stiff with inwoven gold :
Then thro' th' illumin'd dome, to balmy rest
Th' obsequious herald guides each princely guest :
While to his regal bow'r the king ascends,
And beauteous Helen on her lord attends. 410

Soon as the morn, in orient purple drest,
Unbarr'd the portal of the roseate east,
The monarch rose ; magnificent to view,
Th' imperial mantle o'er his vest he threw :
The glitt'ring zone athwart his shoul'der cast, 415
A starry falchion low-depending grac'd ;
Clasp'd on his feet th' embroider'd sandals shine ;
And forth he moves, majestick and divine :
Instant to young Telemachus he press'd,
And thus benevolent his speech address'd. 420

Say, royal youth, sincere of soul, report
What cause hath led you to the Spartan court ?
Do publick or domestick cares constrain
This toilsome voyage o'er the surgy main ?

O highly-favour'd delegate of Jove ! 425
(Replies the prince) inflam'd with filial love,
And anxious hope, to hear my parent's doom,
A suppliant to your royal court I come.
Our sov'reign feat a lewd usurping race
With lawless riot, and mis-rule disgrace ; 430

To pamper'd insolence devoted fall
 Prime of the flock, and choicest of the stall :
 For wild ambition wings their bold desire,
 And all to mount th' imperial bed aspire.
 But prostrate I implore, oh king ! relate 435
 The mournful series of my father's fate :
 Each known disaster of the man disclose,
 Born by his mother to a world of woes !
 Recite them ! nor in erring pity fear
 To wound with storied grief the filial ear : 440
 If e'er Ulysses, to reclaim your right,
 Avow'd his zeal in council or in fight,
 If Phrygian camps the friendly toils attest,
 To the fire's merit give the son's request.
 Deep from his inmost soul Atrides sigh'd, 445
 And thus indignant to the prince reply'd :
 Heav'ns ! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
 An absent hero's nuptial joys profane !

v. 447. *Heav'ns ! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train.*]
 Menelaus is fired with indignation at the injuries offered
 his friend by the suitors : he breaks out into an exclama-
 tion, and in a just contempt vouchsafes not to mention
 them : he thinks he fully distinguishes whom he intends,
 by calling them ἀνάλκιδες αὐτοὶ, *those cowards*. The com-
 parison which he introduces is very just, they are the
 fawns, Ulysses is the lion.

This is the first simile that Homer has inserted in the
 Odyssey ; but I cannot think it proceeded from a barren-
 ness of invention, or through phlegm in the declension of
 his years, as some have imagined. The nature of the
 poem requires a difference of style from the Iliad ! The

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 179

So with her young, amid the woodland shades,
A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades, 450
Leaves in the fatal lair the tender fawns,
Climbs the green cliff, or feeds the flow'ry lawns :
Meantime return'd, with dire remorseless sway
The monarch savage rends the trembling prey.
With equal fury, and with equal fame, 455
Ulysses soon shall re-assert his claim.
O Jove, supreme, whom Gods and men revere !
And * thou, to whom 'tis giv'n to gild the
sphere !
With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid
The chief adopted by the martial Maid ! 460

Iliad rushes along like a torrent ; the Odyssey flows greatly on like a deep stream, with a smooth tranquillity ; Achilles is all fire, Ulysses all wisdom.

The simile in Homer is really beautiful ; but in Hobbs ridiculous.

As when a stag and hind ent'ring the den
Of th' absent lion, lulls his whelps with tales,
Of hills and dales ; the lion comes agen,
And tears them into pieces with his nails.

Can any thing be more foreign to the sense of Homer, or worse translated ? He construes *γενναῖος ἐχένης*, by telling stories of hills and dales to the lion's whelps, instead of *fuga investigat* : but such mistakes are so frequent in Hobbs, that one would almost suspect his learning in Greek ; he has disgraced the best poet, and a very great historian ; Homer, and Thucydides.

* Apollo.

Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,
 As when contending on the Lesbian shore
 His prowess Philomelides confess'd,
 And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor bless'd:
 Then soon th' invaders of his bed and throne, 465
 Their love presumptuous shall with life atone.
 With patient ear, oh royal youth, attend
 The storied labours of thy father's friend:
 Fruitful of deeds, the copious tale is long,
 But truth severe shall dictate to my tongue : 470
 Learn what I heard the sea-born seer relate,
 Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.

Long on th' Ægyptian coast by calms confin'd,
 Heav'n to my fleet refus'd a prosp'rous wind:
 No vows had we preferr'd, nor victim slain ! 475
 For this the Gods each fav'ring gale restrain :
 Jealous, to see their high behests obey'd;
 Severe, if men th' eternal rights evade.
 High o'er a gulfy sea, the Pharian isle
 Fronts the deep roar of disemboing Nile : 480

v. 462. *As when contending on the Lesbian shore.*] The poet here gives an account of one of Ulysses's adventures. Philomelides was king of Lesbos, and Eustathius observes, that there was a tradition that Ulysses and Diomedes slew him, and turned a stately monument he had raised for himself into a publick place for the reception of strangers.

v. 479 — *The Pharian isle.*] This description of Pharos has given great trouble to the criticks and geographers; it is generally concluded, that the distance of Pharos is about seven stadia from Alexandria; Ammianus

Her distance from the shore, the course begun
At dawn, and ending with the setting sun,

Marcellinus mentions this very passage thus; l. xxii. *In-
sula Pharos, ubi Protea cum Phocarum gregibus diversatum
Homerus fabulatur inflatus, à civitatis littore mille passibus
disparata*, or, *about a mile distant from the shores*. How
then comes Homer to affirm it to be distant a full day's
sail? Dacier answers, that Homer might have heard that
the Nile, continually bringing down much earthy sub-
stance, had enlarged the continent: and knowing it not
to be so distant in his time, took the liberty of a poet, and
described it as still more distant in the days of Menelaus.
But Dacier never sees a mistake in Homer. Had his Poetry
been worse if he had described the real distance of Pharos?
It is allowable in a poet to disguise the truth, to adorn
his story; but what ornament has he given his poetry by
this enlargement? Bochart has fully proved that there is
no accession to the continent from any substance that the
Nile brings down with it: the violent agitation of the
seas prohibit it from lodging, and forming itself into soli-
dity. Eratosthenes is of opinion, that Homer was igno-
rant of the mouths of Nile: but Strabo answers, that his
silence about them is not an argument of his ignorance;
for neither has he ever mentioned where he was born.
But Strabo does not enter fully into the meaning of Era-
tosthenes: Eratosthenes does not mean that Homer was ig-
norant of the mouths of the Nile from his silence, but be-
cause he places Pharos at the distance of a whole day's sail
from the continent. The only way to unite this incon-
sistence is to suppose, that the poet intended to specify the
Pelusiac mouth of Nile, from which Pharos stands about a
day's sail: but this is submitted to the criticks.

I cannot tell whether one should venture to make use of
the word Nile in the translation; it is doubtless an ana-
chronism; that name being unknown in the times of Ho-

A galley measures ; when the stiffer gales
 Rise on the poop, and fully stretch the sails.
 There, anchor'd vessels safe in harbour lie, 485
 Whilst limpid springs the failing cask supply.

And now the twentieth sun descending, laves
 His glowing axle in the western waves ;
 Still with expanded sails we court in vain
 Propitious winds, to waft us o'er the main : 490
 And the pale mariner at once deplores
 His drooping vigour, and exhausted stores.
 When lo ! a bright cœrulean form appears,
 The fair Eidothea ! to dispel my fears ;
 Proteus her sire divine. With pity press'd, 495
 Me sole the daughter of the deep address'd ;
 What-time with hunger pin'd, my absent mates
 Roam the wild isle in search of rural cates,
 Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood
 Appease th' afflictive fierce desire of food. 500

mer and Menelaus, when the Nile was called Ægyptus,
 Homer in this very book

— — Αἰγύπτῳ Δὲ περὶ ποταμοῦ.

Yet on the other hand, this name of Ægyptus is so little known, that a common reader would scarce distinguish the river from the country : and indeed universal custom has obtained for using the Latin name instead of the Grecian, in many other instances which are equally anachronisms : witness all the names of the Gods and Goddesses throughout Homer ; Jupiter for Zeus, Juno for Erè, Neptune for Posidon, &c.

v. 499. *Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood.*] Menelaus says, hunger was so violent among his companions,

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 183

Whoe'er thou art (the azure Goddess cries)
Thy conduct ill deserves the praise of wife :
Is death thy choice, or misery thy boast,
That here inglorious on a barren coast
Thy brave associates droop, a meagre train 505
With famine pale, and ask thy care in vain ?

Struck with the kind reproach, I straight reply ;
Whate'er thy title in thy native sky,
A Goddess fure ! for more than mortal grace
Speaks thee descendant of ætherial race : 510
Deem not, that here of choice my fleet remains ;
Some heav'nly pow'r averse my stay constrains :

that they were compelled to eat fish. Plutarch in his Symposiacks observes, that among the Syrians and Greeks, to abstain from fish was esteemed a piece of sanctity ; that though the Greeks were encamped upon the Hellespont, there is not the least intimation that they eat fish, or any sea provision ; and that the companions of Ulysses, in the twelfth book of the Odyssey, never sought for fish till all their other provisions were consumed, and that the same necessity compelled them to eat the herds of the sun which induced them to take fish. No fish is ever offered in sacrifice : the Pythagoreans in particular command fish not to be eaten more strictly than any other animal : fish afford no excuse at all for their destruction ; they live as it were in another world, disturb not our air, consume not our fruits, or injure the waters ; and therefore the Pythagoreans, who were unwilling to offer violence to any animals, fed very little, or not at all on fishes. I thought it necessary to insert this from Plutarch, because it is an observation that explains other passages in the sequel of the Odyssey.

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O, piteous of my fate, vouchsafe to shew,
 (For what's sequester'd from celestial view ?)
 What pow'r becalms th' innavigable seas ? 515
 What guilt provokes him, and what vows appease ?
 I ceas'd, when affable the Goddess cry'd ;
 Observe, and in the truths I speak confide :
 Th' orac'lous seer frequents the Pharian coast,
 From whose high bed my birth divine I boast : 520
 Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main,
 The delegate of Neptune's wat'ry reign.

v. 521. *Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main.*] Eustathius enumerates various opinions concerning Proteus ; some understand Proteus allegorically to signify the first matter which undergoes all changes ; others make him an emblem of true friendship, which ought not to be settled till it has been tried in all shapes : others make Proteus a picture of a flatterer, who takes up all shapes, and suits himself to all forms, in compliance to the temper of the person whom he courts. The Greeks (observes Diodorus) imagined all these metamorphoses of Proteus to have been borrowed from the practices of the Ægyptian kings, who were accustomed to wear the figures of lions, bulls or dragons in their diadems, as emblems of royalty, and sometimes that of trees, &c. not so much for ornament as terrour. Others took Proteus to be an enchanter ; and Eustathius recounts several that were eminent in this art, as Cratisthenes the Phliasian (which Dacier renders by mistake Calisthenes the physician) who when he pleased could appear all on fire, and assume other appearances to the astonishment of the spectators : such also was Xenophon, Scymnus of Tarentum, Philippides of Syracuse, Heraclitus of Mitylene, and Nymphodorus, all practisers of magical arts ; and Eustathius recites that the Phocæ

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Watch with infiduous care his known abode ;
 There fast in chains constrain the various God :
 Who bound, obedient to superiour force, 525
 Unerring will prescribe your destin'd course.
 If studious of your realms, you then demand
 Their state, since last you left your natal land ;
 Instant the God obsequious will disclose
 Bright tracks of glory, or a cloud of woes. 530
 She ceas'd, and suppliant thus I made reply ;
 O Goddess ! on thy aid my hopes rely :
 Dictate propitious to my duteous ear,
 What arts can captivate the changeful seer ?
 For perilous th' assay, unheard the toil, 535
 T' elude the prescience of a God by guile.

were made use of in their incantations. Some write that Proteus was an Ægyptian tumbler, who could throw himself into variety of figures and postures: others, a stage-player; others, that he was a great general, skilled in all the arts and stratagems of war: Dacier looks upon him to have been an enchanter, or *δαιμονιοποις*. It is certain from Herodotus, that there was in the times of Menelaus, a king named Proteus who reigned in Memphis; that Ægypt was always remarkable for those who excelled in magical arts: thus Jannes and Jambres changed, at least in appearance, a rod into a serpent, and water into blood: it is not therefore improbable but that Menelaus, hearing of him while he was in Ægypt, went to consult him as an enchanter, which kind of men always pretended to fore-know events: this perhaps was the real foundation of the whole story concerning Proteus; the rest is the fiction and embellishment of the poet, who ascribes to his Proteus whatever the credulity of men usually ascribes to enchanter.

Thus to the Goddess mild my suit I end.
 Then she. Obedient to my rule, attend :
 When thro' the zone of heav'n the mounted sun
 Hath journey'd half, and half remains to run ; 540
 The feer, while zephyrs curl the swelling deep,
 Basks on the breezy shore, in grateful sleep,
 His oozy limbs. Emerging from the wave,
 The Phocæ swift furround his rocky cave,
 Frequent and full ; the consecrated train 545
 Of * her, whose azure trident awes the main :
 There wallowing warm, th' enormous herd exhales
 An oily steam, and taints the noon-tide gales.
 To that recess, commodious for surprise,
 When purple light shall next suffuse the skies, 550
 With me repair ; and from thy warrior band
 Three chosen chiefs of dauntless soul command :
 Let their auxiliar force befriend the toil,
 For strong the God, and perfected in guile.
 Stretch'd on the shelly shore, he first surveys 555
 The flouncing herd ascending from the seas ;
 Their number summ'd, repos'd in sleep profound
 The scaly charge their guardian God furround :
 So with his batt'ning flocks the careful swain
 Abides, pavilion'd on the grassy plain. 560
 With pow'rs united, obstinately bold
 Invade him, couch'd amid the scaly fold :

* Amphitrite.

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Instant he wears, elusive of the rape,
 The mimick force of ev'ry savage shape :
 Or glides with liquid lapse a murm'ring stream,
 Or wrapt in flame, he glows at ev'ry limb. 566
 Yet still retentive, with redoubled might
 Thro' each vain passive form constrain his flight.
 But when, his native shape resum'd, he stands
 Patient of conquest, and your cause demands ; 570
 The cause that urg'd the bold attempt declare,
 And soothe the vanquish'd with a victor's pray'r.
 The bands relax'd, implore the seer to say
 What godhead interdicts the wat'ry way ?
 Who straight propitious, in prophetick strain 575
 Will teach you to repass th' unmeasur'd main.
 She ceas'd, and bounding from the shelvy shore,
 Round the descending nymph the waves redounding
 roar,

High wrapt in wonder of the future deed,
 With joy impetuous, to the port I speed : 580
 The wants of nature with repast suffice,
 'Till night with grateful shade involv'd the skies,
 And shed ambrosial dews. Fast by the deep,
 Along the tented shore, in balmy sleep, 584

v. 569. *But when, his native shape resum'd, &c.*] This is founded upon the practice of enchanters, who never give their answers, till they have astonished the imagination of those who consult them with their juggling delusions. *Dacier.*

Our cares were lost. When o'er the eastern lawn,
 In saffron robes the daughter of the dawn
 Advanc'd her rosy steps ; before the bay,
 Due ritual honours to the Gods I pay ;
 Then seek the place the sea-born nymph assign'd,
 With three associates of undaunted mind. 590
 Arriv'd, to form along th' appointed strand
 For each a bed, she scoops the hilly sand :
 Then from her azure car, the finny spoils
 Of four vast Phocæ takes, to veil her wiles :
 Beneath the finny spoils, extended prone, 595
 Hard toil ! the prophet's piercing eye to shun ;
 New from the corse, the scaly frauds diffuse
 Unfavoury stench of oil, and brackish ooze :
 But the bright sea-maid's gentle pow'r implor'd,
 With nectar'd drops the sick'ning sense restor'd. 600

Thus 'till the sun had travell'd half the skies,
 Ambush'd we lie, and wait the bold emprise :
 When thronging quick to bask in open air,
 The flocks of Ocean to the strand repair :
 Couch'd on the sunny sand, the monsters sleep : 605
 Then Proteus mounting from the hoary deep,
 Surveys his charge, unknowing of deceit :
 (In order told, we make the sum compleat.)
 Pleas'd with the false review, secure he lies,
 And leaden slumbers press his drooping eyes. 610
 Rushing impetuous forth, we straight prepare
 A furious onset with the sound of war,

And shouting seize the God : our force t'evade
 His various arts he soon resumes in aid :
 A Lion now, he curls a furgy mane ; 615
 Sudden, our bands a spotted pard restrain ;
 Then arm'd with tusks, and light'ning in his eyes,
 A boar's obscener shape the God belies :
 On spiry volumes, there, a dragon rides ;
 Here, from our strict embrace a stream he glides :
 And last, sublime his stately growth he rears, 621
 A tree, and well-dissembled foliage wears.
 Vain efforts ! with superiour pow'r compress'd,
 Me with reluctance thus the seer address'd.
 Say, son of Atreus, say what God inspir'd 625
 This daring fraud, and what the boon desir'd?

v. 613. *And shouting seize the God :—*] Proteus has, through the whole story, been described as a God who knew all things ; it may then be asked, how comes it that he did not foreknow the violence that was designed against his own person ? and is it not a contradiction, that he who knew Menelaus without information, should not know that he lay in ambush to seize him ? The only answer that occurs to me is, that these enchanters never pretend to have an inherent foreknowledge of events, but learn things by magical arts, and by recourse to the secrets of their profession ; so that Proteus having no suspicion, had not consulted his art, and consequently might be surpris'd by Menelaus : so far is agreeable to the pretensions of such deluders : the poet indeed has drawn him in colours stronger than life ; but poetry adds or detracts at pleasure, and is allowed frequently to step out of the way, to bring a foreign ornament into the story.

I thus ; O thou, whose certain eye foresees
 The fix'd event of fate's remote decrees ;
 After long woes, and various toil endur'd,
 Still on this desert isle my fleet is moor'd ; 630
 Unfriended of the gales. All-knowing ! say,
 What Godhead interdicts the wat'ry way ?
 What vows repentant will the pow'r appease,
 To speed a prosp'rous voyage o'er the seas ?

To Jove (with stern regard the God replies) 635
 And all th' offended synod of the skies,
 Just hecatombs with due devotion slain,
 Thy guilt absolv'd, a prosp'rous voyage gain.
 To the firm sanction of thy fate attend !
 An exile thou, nor cheering face of friend, 640
 Nor sight of natal shore, nor regal dome
 Shalt yet enjoy, but still art doom'd to roam.
 Once more the Nile, who from the secret source
 Of Jove's high seat descends with sweepy force,

v. 635. *To Jove—Just hecatombs — &c.*] Homer continually inculcates morality, and piety to the Gods ; he gives in this place a great instance of the necessity of it. Menelaus cannot succeed in any of his actions, till he pays due honours to the Gods ; the neglect of sacrifice is the occasion of all his calamity, and the performance of it opens a way to all his future prosperity.

v. 643. — — — *Nile, who from the secret source
 Of Jove's high seat descends—*]

Homer, it must be confessed, gives the epithet *Διίπερος* generally to all rivers ; if he has used it here peculiarly, there might have been room to have imagined that he had been

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Must view his billows white beneath thy oar, 645
And altars blaze along his sanguine shore.
Then will the Gods, with holy pomp ador'd,
To thy long vows a safe return accord.

He ceas'd: heart-wounded with afflictive pain,
(Doom'd to repeat the perils of the main, 650
A shelly tract and long!) O feer, I cry,
To the stern sanction of th' offended sky
My prompt obedience bows. But deign to say,
What fate propitious, or what dire dismay
Sustain those peers, the reliques of our host, 655
Whom I with Nestor on the Phrygian coast
Embracing left? Must I the warriors weep,
Whelm'd in the bottom of the monstrous deep?
Or did the kind domestick friend deplore
The breathless heroes on their native shore? 660

Prefs not too far, reply'd the God; but cease
To know, what known will violate thy peace:

acquainted with the true cause of the inundations of this famous river: the word *Διπτερὴς* implies it: for it is now generally agreed, that these prodigious inundations proceed from the vast rains and the melting of the snows on the Mountains of the Moon in Æthiopia, about the autumnal Æquinox; when those rains begin to fall, the river by degrees increases, and as they abate, it decreases; the word *Διπτερὴς* is therefore peculiarly proper when applied to the Nile; for though all rivers depend upon the waters that fall from the air, or *ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος*, yet the Nile more especially; for when the rain ceases, the Nile consists only of seven empty channels.

Too curious of their doom ! with friendly woe
 Thy breast will heave, and tears eternal flow.
 Part live ! the rest, a lamentable train ! 665
 Range the dark bounds of Pluto's dreary reign.
 Two, foremost in the roll of Mars renown'd,
 Whose arms with conquest in thy cause were crown'd,
 Fell by disastrous fate ; by tempests tost,
 A third lives wretched on a distant coast. 670
 By Neptune rescu'd from Minerva's hate,
 On Gyræ, safe Oïlean Ajax sat,
 His ship o'erwhelm'd ; but frowning on the floods,
 Impious he roar'd defiance to the Gods ;
 To his own prowess all the glory gave, 675
 The Pow'r defrauding who vouchsaf'd to save.
 This heard the raging Ruler of the main ;
 His spear, indignant for such high disdain,
 He lanch'd ; dividing with his forky mace
 Th' aerial summit from the marble base : 680
 The rock rush'd sea-ward with impetuous roar
 Ingulf'd, and to th' abyss the boaster bore.

v. 682. — — *and to th' abyss the boaster bore.* It is in the original, *He died, having drunk the salt water.* This verse has been omitted in many editions of Homer ; and the ancients, says Eustathius, blame Aristarchus for not marking it as a verse that ought to be rejected ; the simplicity of it consists in the sense, more than in the terms ; and it is unworthy of Proteus to treat the death of Ajax with pleasantry, as he seems to do, by adding *having drunk salt water* : but why may not Proteus be supposed to be serious, and the term *Ἀλμυρὴν ἕδαρς*, to imply no more than that he was drowned in the waves of the ocean ? I know

By Juno's guardian aid, the wat'ry vast
 Secure of storms, your royal brother past :
 'Till coasting nigh the cape, where Malea shrouds
 Her spiry cliffs amid surrounding clouds ; 686
 A whirling gust tumultuous from the shore,
 Across the deep his lab'ring vessel bore.
 In an ill-fated hour the coast he gain'd,
 Where late in regal pomp Thyestes reign'd ; 690
 But when his hoary honours bow'd to fate,
 Ægythus govern'd in paternal state.
 The surges now subside, the tempest ends ;
 From his tall ship the king of men descends :
 There fondly thinks the Gods conclude his toil !
 Far from his own domain salutes the soil : 696
 With rapture oft' the verge of Greece reviews,
 And the dear turf with tears of joy bedews.
 Him thus exulting on the distant strand,
 A spy distinguish'd from his airy stand ; 700
 To bribe whose vigilance, Ægythus told
 A mighty sum of ill-persuading gold :
 There watch'd this guardian of his guilty fear,
 'Till the twelfth moon had wheel'd her pale career ;

only one reason that can give any colour to the objection, viz. its being possibly become a vulgar expression, and used commonly in a ludicrous sense ; then indeed it is to be avoided in poetry, but it does not follow, because perhaps it might be used in this manner in the days of these criticks, that therefore it was so used in the days of Homer. What was poetical in the time of the poet, might be grown vulgar in the time of the criticks.

And now admonish'd by his eye, to court 705
 With terrour wing'd conveys the dread report.
 Of deathful arts expert, his lord employs
 The ministers of blood in dark surprise :
 And twenty youths in radiant mail incas'd,
 Close ambush'd nigh the spacious hall he plac'd. 710
 Then bids prepare the hospitable treat :
 Vain shews of love to veil his felon-hate !
 To grace the victor's welcome from the wars,
 A train of courfers, and triumphal cars
 Magnificent he leads ! the royal guest 715
 Thoughtless of ill, accepts the fraudulent feast.
 The troop forth issuing from the dark recess,
 With homicidal rage the king oppresses !
 So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall,
 The sov'reign of the herd is doom'd to fall. 720
 The partners of his fame and toils at Troy,
 Around their lord, a mighty ruin ! lie :
 Mix'd with the brave, the base invaders bleed ;
 Ægythus sole survives to boast the deed.
 He said ; chill horrors shook my shiv'ring soul, 725
 Rack'd with convulsive pangs in dust I roll ;

v. 719. *So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall, &c.* Dacier translates βῆν, by *taureau*, a bull ; and misunderstands Eustathius, who directly says, that in the second Iliad the poet compares Agamemnon to a bull, in this place to an ox, ταύρῳ εἵκασεν νῦν βοῖ αὐτὸν ὁμοίωσεν. The one was undoubtedly designed to describe the courage and majestick port of a warrior, the other to give us an image of a prince falling in full peace and plenty, ὡς βῆν ἐπὶ φάτνῃ.

And hate, in madness of extreme despair,
 To view the sun, or breathe the vital air.
 But when superiour to the rage of woe,
 I stood restor'd, and tears had ceas'd to flow ; 730
 Lenient of grief, the pitying God began—
 Forget the brother, and resume the man :
 To Fate's supreme dispose the dead resign,
 That care be Fate's, a speedy passage thine.
 Still lives the wretch who wrought the death de-
 plor'd, 735

But lives a victim for thy vengeful sword ;
 Unless with filial rage Orestes glow,
 And swift prevent the meditated blow ;
 You timely will return a welcome guest,
 With him to share the sad funereal feast. 740

He said ; new thoughts my beating heart employ,
 My gloomy soul receives a gleam of joy.
 Fair hope revives ; and eager I address
 The prescient Godhead to reveal the rest.
 The doom decreed of those disastrous two 745
 I've heard with pain, but oh ! the tale pursue ;
 What third brave son of Mars the Fates constrain
 To roam the howling desert of the main :
 Or in eternal shade if cold he lies,
 Provoke new sorrow from these grateful eyes. 750

v. 749. *Or in eternal shade if cold he lies.*] Proteus in the beginning of his relation had said, that *one person was alive, and remained enclosed by the ocean* : how then comes

That chief (rejoin'd the God) his race derives,
From Ithaca, and wond'rous woes survives ;

Menelaus here to say, Give me an account of that other person who is alive, or *dead*? Perhaps the sorrow which Menelaus conceived for his friend Ulysses, might make him fear the worst; and Proteus adding, *enclosed by the ocean*, might give a suspicion that he was dead, the words being capable of ambiguity. However this be, it sets the friendship of Menelaus in a strong light: where friendship is sincere, a state of uncertainty is a state of fears, we dread even possibilities, and give them an imaginary certainty. Upon this one of the finest compliments that a poet ever made to a patron turns, that of Horace to Mecænas, in the first of the Epodes.

It may not perhaps be disagreeable to the reader to observe, that Virgil has borrowed this story of Proteus from Homer, and translated it almost literally. Rapin says, that Homer's description is more ingenious and fuller of invention, but Virgil's more judicious. I wish that critick had given his reasons for his opinion. I believe in general, the plan of the Iliad and Odyssey is allowed by the best of criticks to be more perfect than that of the Æneis. Homer, with respect to the unity of time, has the advantage very manifestly: Rapin confesses it, and Aristotle proposes him as an example to all epick authors. Where then is the superiority of judgment? Is it that there are more fabulous, I mean incredible, stories in Homer than Virgil? as that of the Cyclops, the ships of Alcinous, &c. Virgil has imitated most of these bold fables, and the story of the ships of Alcinous is not more incredible than the transformation of the ships of Æneas. But this is too large a subject to be discussed in the compass of these annotations. In particular passages I freely allow the preference to Virgil, as in the descent of Æneas into hell, &c. but in this story of Proteus, I cannot see any superiority of judgment. Virgil is

Laertes' son : girt with circumfluous tides,
 He still calamitous constraint abides.
 Him in Calypso's cave of late I view'd, 755
 When streaming grief his faded cheek bedew'd.
 But vain his pray'r, his arts are vain to move
 Th' enamour'd Goddess, or elude her love :
 His vessel sunk, and dear companions lost,
 He lives reluctant on a foreign coast. 760
 But oh belov'd by heav'n ! reserv'd to thee
 A happier lot the smiling Fates decree :

little more than a translator ; to shew the particulars would
 be too tedious : I refer it to the reader to compare the two
 authors, and shall only instance in one passage.

Ἡμεῖς δ' αἰψ' ἑάχοντες ἐπεσσύμεθ', ἀμφὶ δὲ χεῖρας
 βάλλομεν· ἔδ' ὁ γέρον δολίης ἐπελήθετο τέχνης,
 Ἄλλ' ἥτοι πρότερον λέων γένετ' ἢ γένεαι,
 Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα δράκων, καὶ πάριος, ἠδὲ μέγας σῦς,
 Γίγνητο δ' ὑγρὸν ὕδωρ, καὶ δένδρεον ὑψιπέτῃλον, &c.

“ Cum clamore ruit magno, manicisque jacentem
 “ Occupat : ille suæ contra non immemor artis,
 “ Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum,
 “ Ignemque, horribilemque feram, fluviumque li-
 “ quentem, &c.

Homer has a manifest advantage in the occasion of the
 story : the loss of a few bees seems to be a cause too tri-
 vial for an undertaking so great as the surprise of a Deity :
 whereas the whole happiness of Menelaus depends upon
 this consultation of Proteus : this is a far more important
 cause, and consequently in this respect something more is
 due to Homer than the sole honour of an inventor.

Free from that law, beneath whose mortal fway
 Matter is chang'd, and varying forms decay ;
 Elysium shall be thine ; the blisful plains 765
 Of utmost earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns.
 Joys ever young, unmix'd with pain or fear,
 Fill the wide circle of th' eternal year :
 Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime :
 The fields are florid with unfading prime ; 770
 From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,
 Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow :
 But from the breezy deep the blest inhale
 The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.

v. 765. *Elysium shall be thine ; the blisful plains
 Of utmost earth, &c.]*

This is the only place in which the Elysian field is mentioned in Homer. The conjectures of the ancients are very various about it : Plato in his *Phæd.* places it in *cælo stellato*, or the region of the stars ; but since Homer fixes it in *πέλαγα γαίης*, or (as Milton expresses it) at the *earth's green end*, I will pass over the conjectures of others, especially since the *μυδάρον Νήσοι*, by which others express Elysium, confine it to this world.

Strabo, says Eustathius, places it not far from Maurusia, that lies near the streights : it is supposed by Bochart, as Dacier observes, that the fable is of Phœnician extraction, that *Alizuth* in Hebrew signifies *joy* or *exultation*, which word the Greeks, adapting to their way of pronunciation, called *Elysus*. If this be true, I should come into an opinion that has much prevailed, that the Greeks had heard of *Paradise* from the Hebrews ; and that the Hebrews describing *Paradise* as a place of *Alizuth*, or *joy*, gave occasion to all the fables of the Grecian *Elysium*.

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This grace peculiar will the Gods afford 775
To thee the son of Jove, and beauteous Helen's lord.

He ceas'd, and plunging in the vast profound,
Beneath the God the whirling billows bound.
Then speeding back, involv'd in various thought,
My friends attending at the shore I sought. 780

Arriv'd, the rage of hunger we controul,
'Till night with silent shade invests the pole ;
Then lose the cares of life in pleasing rest.—
Soon as the morn reveals the roseate east,
With sails we wing the masts, our anchors weigh,
Unmoor the fleet, and rush into the sea. 786

Rang'd on the banks, beneath our equal oars
White curl the waves, and the vex'd ocean roars.
Then steering backward from the Pharian Isle,
We gain the stream of Jove-descending Nile: 790
There quit the ships, and on the destin'd shore
With ritual hecatombs the Gods adore:

Their wrath aton'd, to Agamemnon's name
A cenotaph I raise of deathless fame,
These rites to piety and grief discharg'd, 795
The friendly Gods a springing gale enlarg'd :
The fleet swift tilting o'er the surges flew,
'Till Grecian cliffs appear'd, a blissful view !

Thy patient ear hath heard me long relate
A story, fruitful of disastrous fate : 800
And now, young prince, indulge my fond request ;
Be Sparta honour'd with his royal guest,

'Till from his eastern goal, the joyous fun
 His twelfth diurnal race begins to run.
 Meantime my train the friendly gifts prepare, 805
 Three sprightly coursers, and a polish'd car :
 With these, a goblet of capacious mould,
 Figur'd with art to dignify the gold,
 (Form'd for libation to the Gods) shall prove
 A pledge and monument of sacred love. 810
 My quick return, young Ithacus rejoin'd,
 Damps the warm wishes of my raptur'd mind :
 Did not my fate my needful haste constrain,
 Charm'd by your speech, so graceful and humane,
 Lost in delight the circling year would roll, 815
 While deep attention fix'd my list'ning soul.
 But now to Pyle permit my destin'd way,
 My lov'd associates chide my long delay :
 In dear remembrance of your royal grace,
 I take the present of the promis'd vase ; 821
 The coursers for the campaign sports, retain ;
 That gift our barren rocks will render vain :

v. 806. *Three sprightly coursers.*] How comes it to pass that Menelaus proffers three horses to Telemachus ? This was a compleat set among the ancients, they used one pole-horse and two leaders. *Eustathius.*

v. 822. *That gift our barren rocks will render vain.*] This passage where Telemachus refuses the horses has been much observed, and turned to a moral sense, viz. as a lesson to men to desire nothing but what is suitable to their conditions. Horace has introduced it into his Epistles,

Horrid with cliffs, our meagre land allows
Thin herbage for the mountain goat to browse,

- “ Haud malè Telemachus, proles patientis Ulyssèi ;
“ Non est aptus equis Ithacæ locus, ut neque planis
“ Porrectus spaciis, nec multæ prodigus herbæ :
“ Atride, magis apta tibi tua dona relinquam.”

This is the reason why Ulysses (as Eustathius observes upon the tenth of the Iliad) leaves the horses of Rhæsus to the disposal of Diomedes: so that the same spirit of wisdom reigned in Telemachus, that was so remarkable in Ulysses. This is the reason why Menelaus smiled; it was not at the frankness or simplicity of Telemachus, but it was a smile of joy, to see the young prince inherit his father's wisdom.

It is the remark of Eustathius, that Telemachus is far from exalting the nature of his country; he confesses it to be barren, and more barren than the neighbouring islands; yet that natural and laudable affection which all worthy persons have for their country, makes him prefer it to places of a more happy situation. This appears to me a replication to what Menelaus had before offered concerning the transplantation of Ulysses to Sparta; this is contained in *ἰππολότοιο*; and then the meaning is, It is true Ithaca is a barren region, yet more desirable than this country of Lacedæmon, this *ἰππολότοιο γαῖα*. It is the more probable from the offer of horses which Menelaus had then made, and is also another reason for the smile of Menelaus.

Eustathius remarks that Menelaus, though he has expressed the greatest friendship for Ulysses, yet makes no offer to restore the fortunes of his friend by any military assistance; though he had a most fair opportunity given him to repair the past kindness of Ulysses to his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus; and how comes Telemachus not to ask it either of Nestor or Menelaus? He answers, that this depended upon the uncertainty they

But neither mead nor plain supplies, to feed 825
 The sprightly courser, or indulge his speed :
 To sea-surrounded realms the Gods assign
 Small tract of fertile lawn, the least to mine.

His hand the king with tender passion press'd,
 And smiling, thus the royal youth address'd : 830
 O early worth ! a soul so wise, and young,
 Proclaims you from the sage Ulysses sprung.
 Selected from my stores, of matchless price
 An urn shall recompence your prudent choice :
 Not mean the massy mould of silver, grac'd 835
 By Vulcan's art, the verge with gold enchas'd ;
 A pledge the scepter'd pow'r of Sidon gave,
 When to his realm I plough'd the orient wave.

Thus they alternate ; while with artful care
 The menial train the regal feast prepare : 840
 The firstlings of the flock are doom'd to die ;
 Rich fragrant wines the chearing bowl supply ;
 A female band the gift of Ceres bring ;
 And the gilt roofs with genial triumph ring.

Meanwhile, in Ithaca, the suitor-pow'rs 845
 In active games divide their jovial hours :

were yet under, concerning the life of Ulysses. But the true reason in my opinion is, that the nature of epick poetry requires a contrary conduct ; the hero of the poem is to be the chief agent, and the re-establishment of his fortunes must be owing to his own wisdom and valour. I have enlarged upon this already, so that there is no occasion in this place to insist upon it.

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In areas vary'd with mosaick art,
Some whirl the disk, and some the jav'lin dart.
Aside, sequester'd from the vast resort,
Antinous fat spectator of the sport ; 850
With great Eurymachus, of worth confest,
And high descent, superiour to the rest ; }
Whom young Noëmon lowly thus address.

My ship equipp'd within the neighb'ring port,
The prince, departing from the Pylian court, 855
Requested for his speed ; but courteous, say
When steers he home, or why this long delay ?
For Elis I should sail with utmost speed,
T'import twelve mares which there luxurious feed,
And twelve young mules, a strong laborious race,
New to the plough, unpractis'd in the trace. 861

Unknowing of the course to Pyle design'd,
A sudden horror seiz'd on either mind :
The prince in rural bow'r they fondly thought,
Numb'ring his flocks and herds, not far remote.
Relate, Antinous cries, devoid of guile, 866
When spread the prince his sail for distant Pyle ?
Did chosen chiefs across the gulfy main
Attend his voyage, or domestick train ?
Spontaneous did you speed his secret course, 870
Or was the vessel seiz'd by fraud or force ?

With willing duty, not reluctant mind,
(Noëmon cry'd) the vessel was resign'd.
Who in the balance, with the great affairs 874
Of courts presume to weigh their private cares ?

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With him, the peerage next in pow'r to you :
 And Mentor, captain of the lordly crew,
 Or some celestial in his rev'rend form,
 Safe from the secret rock and adverse storm,
 Pilots the course : for when the glimm'ring ray
 Of yester dawn disclos'd the tender day, 881
 Mentor himself I saw, and much admir'd. —
 Then ceas'd the youth, and from the court retir'd.

Confounded and appall'd, th' unfinish'd game
 The suitors quit, and all to council came : 885
 Antinous first th' assembled peers address,
 Rage sparkling in his eyes, and burning in his breast.

O shame to manhood ! shall one daring boy
 The scheme of all our happiness destroy ?
 Fly unperceiv'd, seducing half the flow'r 890
 Of nobles, and invite a foreign pow'r ?
 The pond'rous engine rais'd to crush us all,
 Recoiling, on his head is sure to fall.
 Instant prepare me, on the neighb'ring strand,
 With twenty chosen mates a vessel mann'd ; 895
 For ambush'd close beneath the Samian shore
 His ship returning shall my spies explore :

v. 896. *For ambush'd close, &c.*] We have here another use which the poet makes of the voyage of Telemachus. Eustathius remarks that these incidents not only diversify but enliven the poem. But it may be asked why the poet makes not use of so fair an opportunity to insert a gallant action of Telemachus, and draw him not as eluding, but defeating his adversaries ? The answer is easy ; That the suitors failed compleatly armed, and Telemachus unpro-

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 205

He soon his rashness shall with life atone,
Seek for his father's fate, but find his own.

With vast applause the sentence all approve;
Then rise, and to the feastful hall remove : 901
Swift to the queen the herald Medon ran,
Who heard the consult of the dire divan :
Before her dome the royal matron stands,
And thus the message of his haste demands. 905

What will the suitors ? must my servant train
Th' allotted labours of the day refrain,

vided of any weapons : and therefore Homer consults credibility, and forbears to paint his young hero in the colours of a knight in romance, who upon all disadvantages engages and defeats his opposers. But then to what purpose is this ambush of the suitors, and what part of the design of the poem is carried on by it? The very chief aim of it is ; To shew the sufferings of Ulysses : he is unfortunate in all relations of life, as a king, as an husband, and here very eminently as a father : these sufferings are laid down in the proposition of the Odyssey as essential to the poem, and consequently this ambush laid by the suitors against the life of Telemachus is an essential ornament.

v. 906. *The speech of Penelope*] Longinus in particular commends this speech as a true picture of a person that feels various emotions of soul, and is borne by every gust of passion from sentiment to sentiment, with sudden and unexpected transitions. There is some obscurity in the Greek ; this arises from the warmth with which she speaks, she has not leisure to explain herself fully, a circumstance natural to a person in anger.

Penelope gives a very beautiful picture of Ulysses : " The
" best of princes are allowed to have their favourites, and

For them to form some exquisite repast?
 Heav'n grant this festival may prove their last!
 Or if they still must live, from me remove 910
 The double plague of luxury and love!
 Forbear, ye sons of insolence! forbear;
 In riot to consume a wretched heir.
 In the young soul illustrious thought to raise,
 Were ye not tutor'd with Ulysses' praise? 915
 Have not your fathers oft' my lord defin'd,
 Gentle of speech, beneficent of mind?
 Some kings with arbitrary rage devour,
 Or in their tyrant-minions vest the pow'r:
 Ulysses let no partial favours fall, 920
 The people's parent, he protect'd all:

“ give a greater share of affection than ordinary to parti-
 “ cular persons. But Ulysses was a father to all his peo-
 “ ple alike, and loved them all as his children; a father,
 “ though he bears a more tender affection to one child
 “ than to another, yet shews them all an equal treatment;
 “ thus also a good king is not sway'd by inclination, but
 “ justice, towards all his subjects.” *Dacier.*

One circumstance is very remarkable, and gives us a full
 view of a person in anger; at the very sight of Medon,
 Penelope flies out into passion; she gives him not time to
 speak one syllable, but speaks herself as if all the suitors
 were present, and reproaches them in the person of Me-
 don, though Medon is just to her and Ulysses; but anger
 is an undistinguishing passion. What she says of ingra-
 titude, recalls to my memory what is to be found in
 Laertius: Aristotle being asked what thing upon earth
 soonest grew old? replied *an obligation* *Τὸ τάχιστα γηράσκει;*
respondit, χάρις.

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 207

But absent now, perfidious and ingrate !
His stores ye ravage, and usurp his state.

He thus ; O were the woes you speak the worst !
They form a deed more odious and accurst ; 925
More dreadful than your boding soul divines :
But pitying Jove avert the dire designs !
The darling object of your royal care
Is mark'd to perish in a deathful snare ;
Before he anchors in his native port, 930
From Pyle re-sailing and the Spartan court ;
Horrid to speak ! in ambush is decreed
The hope and heir of Ithaca to bleed !

Sudden she sunk beneath the weighty woes,
The vital streams a chilling horror froze : 935
The big round tear stands trembling in her eye,
And on her tongue imperfect accents dye.
At length, in tender language, interwove
With sighs, she thus express'd her anxious love.
Why rashly wou'd my son his fate explore, 940
Ride the wild waves, and quit the safer shore ?

v. 941. *Ride the wild waves —*] Were this passage to be rendered literally, it would run thus, *climb the swift ships, which are horses to men on the seas*. Eustathius observes the allusion is very just, and that the only doubt is, whether it be brought in opportunely by Penelope ? It may be doubted, if the mind could find leisure to introduce such allusions ? Dacier answers that Penelope speaks thus through indignation : the grief that she conceives at the hardness of men, in finding out a way to pass the seas as well as land, furnished her with these figures very naturally ; for figures are agreeable to passion.

Did he with all the greatly wretched, crave
A blank oblivion, and untimely grave!

'Tis not reply'd the sage, to Medon giv'n
To know, if some inhabitant of heav'n, 945
In his young breast the daring thought inspir'd;
Or if alone with filial duty fir'd,
The winds and waves he tempts in early bloom,
Studious to learn his absent father's doom.

The sage retir'd: unable to controul 950
The mighty griefs that swell her lab'ring soul,
Rolling convulsive on the floor, is seen
The piteous object of a prostrate queen.
Words to her dumb complaint a pause supplies,
And breath, to waste in unavailing cries. 955
Around their sov'reign wept the menial fair,
To whom she thus address'd her deep despair.

Behold a wretch whom all the Gods consign
To woe! Did ever sorrows equal mine?
Long to my joys my dearest lord is lost, 960
His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast:
Now from my fond embrace, by tempests torn,
Our other column of the state is borne:
Nor took a kind adieu, nor sought consent!—
Unkind confed'rates in his dire intent! 965
Ill suits it with your shews of duteous zeal,
From me the purpos'd voyage to conceal:
'Tho' at the solemn midnight hour he rose,
Why did you fear to trouble my repose?

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 209

He either had obey'd my fond desire, 970
Or seen his mother pierc'd with grief expire.
Bid Dolius quick attend, the faithful slave
Whom to my nuptial train Icarius gave,
T' attend the fruit-groves : with incessant speed
He shall this violence of death decreed, 975
To good Laertes tell. Experienc'd age
May timely intercept the ruffian-rage,
Convene the tribes, the murd'rous plot reveal,
And to their pow'r to save his race appeal.

Then Euryclea thus. My dearest dread ! 980
Tho' to the sword I bow this hoary head,
Or if a dungeon be the pain decreed;
I own me conscious of th' unpleasing deed :
Auxiliar to his flight, my aid implor'd,
With wine and viands I the vessel stor'd : 985
A solemn oath, impos'd, the secret seal'd,
'Till the twelfth dawn the light of heav'n reveal'd.
Dreading the effect of a fond mother's fear,
He dar'd not violate your royal ear.
But bathe, and in imperial robes array'd, 990
Pay due devotions to the * martial Maid,
And rest affianc'd in her guardian aid. }
Send not to good Laertes, nor engage
In toils of state the miseries of age :
'Tis impious to surmise, the Pow'rs divine 995
To ruin doom the Jove-descended line :

* Minerva.

Long shall the race of just Arcefius reign,
And isles remote enlarge his old domain.

The queen her speech with calm attention hears,
Her eyes restrain the silver-streaming tears: 1000
She bathes, and rob'd, the sacred dome ascends:
Her pious speed a female train attends:
The salted cakes in canisters are laid,
And thus the queen invokes Minerva's aid.

v. 998. *And isles remote enlarge his old domain.*] Dacier offers a criticism upon these last words of Euryclea: it cannot be imagined these fertile fields can be spoken of Ithaca; Plutarch's description of it is intirely contradictory to this: "Ithaca, says he, is rough and mountainous, fit
" only to breed goats; upon cultivation it scarce yields
" any fruits, and these so worthless, as scarce to recompense the labour of gathering." Homer therefore by this expression intended the other dominions of Ulysses, such as Cephalenia, &c.

But I question not, that the whole dominions of Ulysses are included, Ithaca as well as Cephalenia; for though Ithaca was mountainous, yet the vallies were fruitful, according to the description of it in the thirteenth of the Odyssey.

The rugged soil allows no level space
For flying chariots, or the rapid race;
Yet not ungrateful to the peasant's pain,
Suffices fulness to the swelling grain:
The loaded trees their various fruits produce,
And clustering grapes afford a gen'rous juice, &c.

As for her remark upon ἀπόπροθεν, it is of no validity; the word stands in opposition to δώματα, and implies no more than *here*, or at a distance in general.

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 211

Daughter divine of Jove, whose arm can
wield 1005

Th' avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield!
If e'er Ulysses to thy fane preferr'd
The best and choicest of his flock and herd;
Hear, Goddess, hear, by those oblations won;
And for the pious fire preserve the son: 1010
His wish'd return with happy pow'r befriend,
And on the suitors let thy wrath descend.

She ceas'd; shrill extasies of joy declare
The fav'ring Goddess present to the pray'r:
The suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice
A signal of her hymenæal choice: 1016

v. 1015. *The suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice
A signal of her hymenæal choice.*]

It may be asked whence this conjecture of the suitors arises? Penelope is described as weeping grievously, and fainting away, and yet immediately the suitors conclude she is preparing for the nuptials. Eustathius answers, that undoubtedly the suitors understood the queen had purified herself with water, and supplicated the Goddess Minerva, though the poet omits the relation of such little particularities. But whence is it that the poet gives a greater share of wisdom to Euryclea than to Penelope? Penelope commands a servant to fly with the news of the absence of Telemachus to Laertes, which could not at all advantage Telemachus, and only grieve Laertes: Euryclea immediately diverts her from that vain intention, advises her to have recourse to heaven, and not add misery to the already miserable Laertes: this is wisdom in Euryclea. But it must be confessed that the other is nature in Penelope: Euryclea is calm, Penelope in a passion: and Homer

Whilst one most jovial thus accost the board ;
 " Too late the queen selects a second lord :
 " In evil hour the nuptial rite intends, 1019
 " When o'er her son disastrous death impends."
 Thus he unskill'd of what the Fates provide !
 But with severe rebuke Antinous cry'd.

These empty vaunts will make the voyage vain ;
 Alarm not with discourse the menial train :
 The great event with silent hope attend ; 1025
 Our deeds alone our counsel must commend.

His speech thus ended short, he frowning rose,
 And twenty chiefs renown'd for valour chose :
 Down to the strand he speeds with haughty strides,
 Where anchor'd in the bay the vessel rides, 1030
 Replete with mail and military store,
 In all her tackle trim to quit the shore.
 The desp'rate crew ascend, unfurl the sails ;
 (The sea-ward prow invites the tardy gales)

would have been a very bad painter of human nature, if he had drawn Penelope, thus heated with passion, in the mild temper of Euryclea ; grief and resentment give Penelope no time to deliberate, whereas Euryclea is less concerned, and consequently capable of thinking with more tranquillity.

v. 1022. *With rebuke severe Antinous cry'd.*] Antinous speaks thus in return to what had been before said by one of the suitors concerning Telemachus, viz. " the queen " little imagines that her son's death approaches ;" he fears lest Penelope should know their intentions, and hinder their measures by raising the subjects of Ithaca that still retained their fidelity. *Dacier.*

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 213

Then take repast, 'till Hesperus display'd 1035
His golden circlet in the western shade.

Meantime the queen without refection due,
Heart-wounded, to the bed of state withdrew :
In her sad breast the prince's fortunes roll,
And hope and doubt alternate seize her soul. 1040
So when the wood-man's toil her cave surrounds,
And with the hunter's cry the grove resounds ;
With grief and rage the mother-lion stung,
Fearless herself, yet trembles for her young.

While pensive in the silent slumb'rous shade, 1045
Sleep's gentle pow'rs her drooping eyes invade ;
Minerva, life-like on imbody'd air
Impress'd the form of Iphthima the fair :

v. 1041. *So when the wood-man's toil, &c.*] The poet, to shew the majesty and high spirit of Penelope, compares her to a lioness : he manages the illusion very artfully : he describes the lioness not as exerting any dreadful acts of violence, (for such a comparison is only proper to be applied to a hero) but inclosed by her enemies ; which at once shews both her danger and nobleness of spirit under it : it is in the Greek δόλιον κύκλον, which may signify either a circle of toils or nets, or a circle of enemies : the former is perhaps preferable, as corresponding best with the condition of Penelope, who was surrounded with the secret ambushes and snares of the suitors. *Eustathius.*

v. 1047. *Minerva, life-like on imbody'd air*
Impress'd the form, &c.]

We have here an imaginary being introduced by the poet : the whole is managed with great judgment ; it is short, because it has not a direct and immediate relation to the progress of the poem and because such imaginary inter-

(Icarius' daughter she, whose blooming charms
 Alur'd Eumelus to her virgin-arms ; 1050
 A scepter'd lord, who o'er the fruitful plain
 Of Theffaly, wide stretch'd his ample reign :)
 As Pallas will'd, along the fable skies
 To calm the queen the phantom-sister flies.
 Swift on the regal dome descending right, 1055
 The bolted valves are pervious to her flight.
 Close to her head the pleasing vision stands,
 And thus performs Minerva's high commands.
 O why, Penelope, this causeless fear,
 To render sleep's soft blessing unsincere ? 1060
 Alike devout to sorrow's dire extreme
 The day-reflection, and the midnight-dream !

courses have ever been looked upon as sudden in appearance, and as sudden in vanishing away. The use the poet makes of it, is to relieve Penelope from the extremity of despair, that she may act her part in the future scenes with courage and constancy. We see it is Minerva who sends this phantom to Penelope to comfort her : now this is an allegory to express that as soon as the violence of sorrow was over, the mind of Penelope returned to some degree of tranquillity : Minerva is no more than the result of her own reflection and wisdom, which banished from her breast those melancholy apprehensions. The manner likewise of its introduction is not less judicious ; the mind is apt to dwell upon those objects in sleep which make a deep impression when awake : this is the foundation of the poet's fiction ; it is no more than a dream which he here describes, but he clothes it with a body, gives it a momentary existence, and by this method exalts a low circumstance into dignity and poetry.

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 215

Thy son, the Gods propitious will restore,
And bid thee cease his absence to deplore.

To whom the queen (whilst yet her pensive
mind 1065

Was in the silent gates of sleep confin'd)

O sister, to my soul for ever dear,

Why this first visit to reprove my fear?

How in a realm so distant shou'd you know

From what deep source my ceaseless sorrows
flow? 1070

To all my hope my royal lord is lost,

His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast:

And with consummate woe to weigh me down,

The heir of all his honours, and his crown,

My darling son is fled! an easy prey 1075

To the fierce storms, or men more fierce than they:

v. 1073. *And with consummate woe, &c.*] In the original, Penelope says plainly, she is more concerned for her son than her husband. I shall translate Dacier's observations upon this passage. We ought not to reproach Penelope for this seemingly shocking declaration, in preferring a son to an husband: her sentiment is natural and just; she had all the reason in the world to believe that Ulysses was dead, so that all her hopes, all her affection was entirely placed upon Telemachus: his loss therefore must unavoidably touch her with the highest degree of sensibility; if he is lost, she can have recourse to no second comfort. But why may we not allow the reason which Penelope herself gives for this superiority of sorrow for Telemachus? "Telemachus, says she, is unexperienced in the world, and unable to contend with difficulties: whereas

Who in a league of blood associates sworn,
Will intercept th' unwary youth's return.

Courage resume, the shadowy form reply'd,
In the protecting care of heav'n confide : 1080
On him attends the blue-ey'd martial Maid ;
What earthly can implore a surer aid ?
Me now the guardian Goddess deigns to send,
To bid thee patient his return attend.

The queen replies : If in the blest abodes 1085
A Goddess, thou hast commerce with the Gods ;
Say, breathes my lord the blissful realm of
light,
Or lies he wrapt in ever-during night ?

Enquire not of his doom, the phantom cries,
I speak not all the counsel of the skies : 1090

“ Ulysses knew how to extricate himself upon all emergencies.” This is a sufficient reason why she should fear more for Telemachus than Ulysses : her affection might be greater for Ulysses than Telemachus, yet her fears might be stronger for the son than the husband, Ulysses being capable to surmount dangers by experience, Telemachus being new to all difficulties.

v. 1089. *Enquire not of his doom, &c.*] It may be asked what is the reason of this conduct, and why should the phantom refuse to relate any thing concerning the condition of Ulysses ? Eustathius answers, that if the phantom had related the full truth of the story, the poem had been at an end ; the very constitution of it requires that Ulysses should arrive unknown to all, but chiefly to his wife, as will appear in the prosecution of the story : the

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 217

Nor must indulge with vain discourse, or long,
The windy satisfaction of the tongue.

Swift thro' the valves the visionary fair
Repas'd, and viewless mix'd with common air.
The queen awakes, deliver'd of her woes : 1095
With florid joy her heart dilating glows :
The vision, manifest of future fate,
Makes her with hope her son's arrival wait.

Meantime the suitors plough the wat'ry plain,
Telemachus in thought already slain ! 1100

question is very natural for an affectionate wife to make concerning an absent husband ; but this being an improper place for the discovery, the poet defers the solution of it, till the unravelling of the whole in the conclusion of the poem.

The action of this book takes up the space of two nights and one day, so that from the opening of the poem to the introduction of Ulysses are six days completed.

But how long a time Telemachus afterwards staid with Menelaus is a question, which has employed some modern French criticks ; one of which maintains, that he staid no longer than these two nights at Lacedæmon : but it is evident from the sequel of the Odyssey, that Telemachus arrived again at Ithaca two days after Ulysses ; but Ulysses was twenty-nine days in passing from Ogygia to Ithaca, and consequently during that whole time Telemachus must have been absent from Ithaca. The ground of that critick's mistake was from the silence of Homer as to the exact time of his stay, which was of no importance, being distinguished by no action, and only in an episodical part. The same thing led me into the like error in the note on v. 421 of the second book, where it was said that Telemachus returned to Ithaca in less than twelve days.

When fight of lefs'ning Ithaca was lost,
Their sail directed for the Samian coast,
A small but verdant isle appear'd in view,
And Afteris th' advancing pilot knew :
An ample port the rocks projected form, 1105
To break the rolling waves, and ruffling storm :
That safe recess they gain with happy speed,
And in close ambush wait the murd'rous deed.

THE
FIFTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE
A R G U M E N T.

The Departure of Ulysses from Calypso.

PALLAS in a council of the Gods complains of the detention of Ulysses in the island of Calypso; whereupon Mercury is sent to command his removal. The seat of Calypso described. She consents with much difficulty, and Ulysses builds a vessel with his own hands, on which he embarks. Neptune overtakes him with a terrible tempest, in which he is shipwrecked, and in the last danger of death; till Leucothea a Sea-Goddes assists him, and after innumerable perils, he gets ashore on Phæacia.

T H E
* F I F T H B O O K
O F T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

THE saffron morn, with early blushes spread,
Now rose refulgent from Tithonus' bed ;
With new-born day to gladden mortal fight,
And gild the courts of heav'n with sacred light.

• Ulysses makes his first entry in this book. It may be asked where properly is the beginning of the action ? It is not necessary that the beginning of the action should be the beginning of the poem ; there is a natural and an artificial order, and Homer makes use of the latter. The action of the *Odyssy* properly begins neither with the poem, nor with the appearance of Ulysses here, but with the relation he makes of his departure from Troy in the ninth book. Bossu has very judiciously remarked, that in the constitution of the fable, the poet ought not to make the departure of a prince from his own country the foundation of his poem, but his return, and his stay in other places involuntary. For if the stay of Ulysses had been voluntary, he would have been guilty in some degree of all the disorders that happened during his absence. Thus in this book Ulysses appears in a desolate island, sitting in tears by the side of the ocean, and looking upon it as the obstacle of his return.

Then met th' eternal synod of the sky,
 Before the God who thunders from on high,
 Supreme in might, sublime in majesty.

5 }
 }

This artificial order is of great use ; it cuts off all languishing and unentertaining incidents, and passes over those intervals of time that are void of action ; it gives continuity to the story, and at first transports the reader into the middle of the subject. In the beginning of the *Odyssey*, the Gods command Mercury to go down to the island of Ogygia, and charge Calypso to dismiss Ulysses : one would think the poem was to end in the compass of a few lines, the poet beginning the action so near the end of the story ; and we wonder how he finds matter to fill up his poem, in the little space of time that intervenes between his first appearance and his re-establishment.

This book, as well as the first, opens with an assembly of the Gods. This is done to give an importance to his poem, and to prepare the mind of the reader to expect every thing that is great and noble, when heaven is engaged in the care and protection of his heroes. Both these assemblies are placed very properly, so as not to interrupt the series of action : the first assembly of the Gods is only preparatory to introduce the action : and the second is no more than a bare transition from Telemachus to Ulysses ; from the recital of the transactions in Ithaca, to what more immediately regards the person of Ulysses.

In the former council, both the voyage of Telemachus and the return of Ulysses were determined at the same time : the day of that assembly is the first day both of the *principal action*, (which is the return of Ulysses) and of the *incident*, which is the voyage of Telemachus ; with this difference, that the incident was immediately put in practice, by the descent of Minerva to Ithaca ; and the execution of it takes up the four preceding books ; whereas the principal action was only then prepared, and the execu-

Pallas, to these, deplores th' unequal fates
Of wise Ulysses, and his toils relates :
Her hero's danger touch'd the pitying pow'r, 10
The nymph's seducements, and the magick bow'r.

Thus she began her plaint. Immortal Jove !
And you who fill the blisful seats above !
Let kings no more with gentle mercy sway,
Or bless a people willing to obey, 15
But crush the nations with an iron rod,
And ev'ry monarch be the scourge of God :
If from your thoughts Ulysses you remove,
Who rul'd his subjects with a father's love.
Sole in an isle, encircled by the main, 20
Abandon'd, banish'd from his native reign,
Unblest he sighs, detain'd by lawless charms,
And press'd unwilling in Calypso's arms
Nor friends are there, nor vessels to convey,
Nor oars to cut th' immeasurable way. 25
And now fierce traitors, studious to destroy
His only son, their ambush'd fraud employ ;
Who, pious, following his great father's fame,
To sacred Pylos and to Sparta came.

tion deferred to the present book, where Mercury is absolutely sent to Calypso.

Eustathius therefore judges rightly when he says, that in the first council, the safety alone of Ulysses was proposed ; but the means how to bring it about are here under consultation, which makes the necessity of the second council.

What words are these (reply'd the Pow'r who
forms 30
The clouds of night, and darkens heav'n with storms)
Is not already in thy soul decreed,
The chief's return shall make the guilty bleed ?
What cannot wisdom do ? Thou may'st restore
The son in safety to his native shore ; 35
While the fell foes who late in ambush lay,
With fraud defeated measure back their way.

Then thus to Hermes the command was giv'n.
Hermes, thou chosen messenger of heav'n!
Go, to the nymph be these our orders borne : 40
'Tis Jove's decree Ulysses shall return :
'The patient man shall view his old abodes,
Nor help'd by mortal hand, nor guiding Gods:

v. 43. *Nor help'd by mortal hands, nor guiding Gods.*] This passage is intricate: why should Jupiter command Ulysses to return without the guidance either of man or God? Ulysses had been just declared the care of Heaven, why should he be thus suddenly abandoned? Eustathius answers, that it spoken solely with respect to the voyage which he immediately undertakes. This indeed shews a reason why this command is given; if he had been under the guidance of a God, the shipwreck (that great incident which brings about the whole catastrophe of the poem) must have been prevented by his power; and as for men, where were they to be procured in a desolate island? What confirms this opinion is, that during the whole shipwreck of Ulysses, there is no interposition of a Deity, nor even of Pallas who used to be his constant guardian; the reason is, because this command of Jupiter forbids all

In twice ten days shall fertile Scheria find,
Alone, and floating to the wave and wind. 45

assistance to Ulysses : Leucothea indeed assists him, but it is not till he is shipwrecked. It appears further, that this interdiction respects only the voyage from Ogygia, because Jupiter orders that there shall be no assistance from man, ἔτε θεῶν πομπῇ, ἐτ' ἀνθρώπων; but Ulysses is transported from Phæacia to Ithaca, ἀνθρώπων πομπῇ, or by the assistance of the Phæacians, as Eustathius observes; and therefore what Jupiter here speaks has relation only to the present voyage. Dacier understands this to be meant of any *visible* assistance only: but this seems a collusion: for whether the Gods assist visibly or invisibly, the effects are the same; and a Deity unseen might have preserved Ulysses from storms, and directly guided him to his own country. But it was necessary for the design of Homer, that Ulysses should not sail directly home; if he had, there had been no room for the relation of his own adventures, and all those surprising narrations he makes to the Phæacians: Homer therefore, to bring about the shipwreck of Ulysses, withdraws the Gods.

v. 45. *Alone, and floating to the wave.*] The word in the original is *Χεδίης*; *πῶς*, as Eustathius observes is understood: it signifies, continues he, a small vessel made of one entire piece of wood, or a vessel about which little wood is used; it is derived from *Χεδόν*, from being *αὐτοσχεδίως* *συμπεπῆχθαι*, or compacted together with ease. Hesychius defines *Χεδία* to be *μικρὰ ναῦς ἢ ξύλα ἃ συνδέουσι, ἃ ἔτω πλέουσι*: that is, a small bark, or float of wood, which sailors bind together, and immediately use in navigation. This observation appeared to me very necessary, to take off an objection made upon a following passage in this book: the criticks have thought it incredible that Ulysses should without any assistance build such a vessel, as Homer de-

The bold Phæacians there, whose haughty line
 Is mixt with Gods, half human, half divine,
 The chief shall honour as some heav'nly guest,
 And swift transport him to his place of rest.
 His vessels loaded with a plenteous store 50
 Of brass, of vestures, and resplendent ore;
 (A richer prize than if his joyful isle
 Receiv'd him charg'd with Ilion's noble spoil)
 His friends, his country, he shall see, tho' late ;
 Such is our fovereign will, and such is fate. 55

scribes ; but if we remember what kind of a vessel it is, it may be reconciled to probability.

v. 46. — — — *Whose haughty line
 Is mixt with Gods.]*

The Phæacians were the inhabitants of Scheria, sometimes called Drepanè, afterwards Corcyra, now Corfu, in the possession of the Venetians. But it may be asked in what these people resemble the Gods ; they are described as a most effeminate nation : whence then this god-like quality ? Eustathius answers, that it is either from their undisturbed felicity, or from their divine quality of general benevolence : he prefers the latter ; but from the general character of the Phæacians, I should prefer the former. Homer frequently describes the Gods, as *αἱ ἑὴν ζωὴν ἔχοντες*, the Gods that live in endless ease : this is suitable to the Phæacians, as will appear more fully in the sequel of the Odyssey. Eustathius remarks, that the poet here gives us in a few lines the heads of the eight succeeding books ; and sure nothing can be a greater instance of Homer's art, than his building so noble an edifice upon so small a foundation : the plan is simple and unadorned, but he embellishes it with all the beauties in nature.

He spoke. The God who mounts the winged
winds

Fast to his feet the golden pinions binds,
That high thro' fields of air his flight sustain
O'er the wide earth, and o'er the boundless main.
He grasps the wand that causes sleep to fly, 60
Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye:
Then shoots from heav'n to high Pieria's steep,
And stoops incumbent on the rolling deep.
So wat'ry fowl, that seek their fishy food,
With wings expanded o'er the foaming flood, 65

v. 56. *The God who mounts the winged winds.*] This is a noble description of Mercury; the verses are lofty and sonorous. Virgil has inserted them in his *Æneis*, lib. iv. 240.

— — — “ pedibus talaria nectit

“ Aurea: quæ sublimem alis, sive æquora supra,

“ Seu terram, rapido pariter cum flamine portant:

“ Tum virgam capit: hæc animas ille evocat Orco

“ Pallentes, alias sub tristia Tartara mittit;

“ Dat somnos adimitque, & lumina morte resignat.”

What is here said of the rod of Mercury, is, as Eustathius observes, an allegory: it is intended to shew the force of eloquence, which has a power to calm or excite, to raise a passion, or compose it: Mercury is the God of eloquence, and he may very properly be said *θελεῖν, ἢ ἀγείρειν*, to cool or inflame the passions according to the allegorical sense of these expressions.

v. 64. *So wat'ry fowl.*] Eustathius remarks, that this is a very just allusion; had the poet compared Mercury to an eagle, though the comparison had been more noble, yet it had been less proper; a sea-fowl most properly re-

Now sailing smooth the level surface sweep,
 Now dip their pinions in the briny deep.
 Thus o'er the world of waters Hermes flew,
 'Till now the distant island rose in view :
 Then swift ascending from the azure wave, 70
 He took the path that winded to the cave.
 Large was the grot, in which the nymph he found,
 (The fair-hair'd nymph with ev'ry beauty crown'd)

presents the passage of a deity over the seas; the comparison being adapted to the element.

Some ancient criticks marked the last verse τῷ ἰκελῷ, &c. with an obelisk, a sign that it ought to be rejected: they thought that the word ἵχθησας did not sufficiently express the swiftness of the flight of Mercury: the word implies no more than *he was carried*: but this expression is applicable to any degree of swiftness; for where is the impropriety, if we say, Mercury was borne along the seas with the utmost rapidity? The word is most properly applied to a chariot, ἐπὶ ὄχρῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἄρμαλῷ. *Eustathius*.

v. 72. *The nymph he found.*] Homer here introduces an episode of Calypso: and as every incident ought to have some relation to the main design of the poem, it may be asked what relation this bears to the other parts of it? A very essential one: the sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the *Odyssey*: here we find him inclosed in an island: all his calamities arise from his absence from his own country: Calypso then, who detains him, is the cause of all his calamities. It is with great judgment that the poet feigns him to be restrained by a Deity, rather than a mortal. It might have appeared somewhat derogatory from the prudence and courage of Ulysses, not to have been able by art or strength to have freed himself from the power of a mortal: but by this conduct the poet at once excuses

She sat and sung : the rocks resound her lays ;
 The cave was brighten'd with a rising blaze : 75
 Cedar and frankincense, an od'rous pile,
 Flam'd on the hearth, and wide perfum'd the isle ;
 While she with work and song the time divides,
 And thro' the loom the golden shuttle guides.

his hero, and aggravates his misfortunes : he is detained involuntarily ; but it is a Goddess who detains him, and it is no disgrace for a man not to be able to overpower a Deity.

Bosſu observes, that the art of disguise is part of the character of Ulyſſes : now this is implied in the name of Calypſo, which ſignifies *concealment*, or *ſecret*. The poet makes his hero ſtay ſeven whole years with this Goddess ; ſhe taught him ſo well, that he afterwards loſt no opportunities of putting her inſtructions in practice, and does nothing without diſguiſe.

Virgil has borrowed part of his deſcription of Circe in the ſeventh book of the *Æneis*, from this of Calypſo.

— — — “ ubi Solis filia lucos
 “ Affiduo reſonet cantu, tectisque ſuperbis
 “ Urit odoratam nocturna in lumina cedrum,
 “ Arguto tenues percurrrens pectine telas.”

What I have here ſaid ſhews likewiſe the neceſſity of this machine of Mercury : it is an eſtabliſhed rule of Horace.

“ Nec deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus
 “ Inciderit :”

Calypſo was a Goddess, and conſequently all human means were inſufficient to deliver Ulyſſes. There was therefore a neceſſity to have recourſe to the Gods.

Without the grot a various sylvan scene 80
 Appear'd around, and groves of living green ;
 Poplars and alders ever quiv'ring play'd,
 And nodding cypresses form'd a fragrant shade ;
 On whose high branches, waving with the storm,
 The birds of broadest wing their mansion form, 85
 The chough, the sea-mew, the loquacious crow,
 And scream aloft, and skim the deeps below.
 Depending vines the shelving cavern screen,
 With purple clusters blushing thro' the green.

v. 80. *The bower of Calypso.*] It is impossible for a painter to draw a more admirable rural landscape : the bower of Calypso is the principal figure, surrounded with a shade of different trees : green meadows adorned with flowers, beautiful fountains, and vines loaded with clusters of grapes, and birds hovering in the air, are seen in the liveliest colours in Homer's poetry. But whoever observes the particular trees, plants, birds, &c. will find another beauty of propriety in this description, every part being adapted, and the whole scene drawn agreeable to a country situate by the sea,

v. 89. *The purple clusters blushing thro' the green.*] Eustathius endeavours to fix the season of the year when Ulysses departed from that island : he concludes it to be in the latter end of autumn, or the beginning of winter ; for Calypso is described as making use of a fire ; so is Arete in the sixth book, and Eumæus and Ulysses in other parts of the Odyssey. This gives us reason to conclude, that the summer heats were past ; and what makes it still more probable is, that a vine is in this place said to be loaded with grapes, which plainly confines the season of the year to the autumn.

Four limpid fountains from the clefts distil, 90 }
 And ev'ry fountain pours a sev'ral rill, }
 In mazy windings wand'ring down the hill : }
 Where bloomy meads with vivid greens were crown'd,
 And glowing violets threw odours round.
 A scene, where if a God should cast his sight, 95
 A God might gaze, and wander with delight !
 Joy touch'd the messenger of heav'n : he stay'd
 Entranc'd, and all the blisful haunt survey'd.
 Him, ent'ring in the cave, Calypso knew ;
 For Pow'rs celestial to each other's view 100
 Stand still confest, tho' distant far they lie
 To habitants of earth, or sea, or sky.
 But sad Ulysses, by himself apart,
 Pour'd the big sorrows of his swelling heart ;

v. 103. *But sad Ulysses, by himself apart.*] Eustathius
 imagines, that the poet describes Ulysses absent from Ca-
 lypso, to the end that Calypso might lay a seeming obli-
 gation upon Ulysses, by appearing to dismiss him volun-
 tarily : for Ulysses being absent, could not know that Mer-
 cury had commanded his departure ; so that this favour
 appears to proceed from the sole kindness of the God-
 des. Dacier dislikes this observation, and shews that de-
 cency requires the absence of Ulysses ; if the poet had de-
 scribed him in the company of Calypso, it might have
 given suspicion of an amorous disposition, and he might
 seem content with his absence from his country : but the
 very nature of the poem requires that he should be conti-
 nually endeavouring to return to it : the poet therefore
 with great judgment describes him agreeably to his cha-
 racter ; his mind is entirely taken up with his misfortunes,
 and neglecting all the pleasures which a Goddess could con-

All on the lonely shore he sat to weep, 105
 And roll'd his eyes around the restless deep;
 Tow'rd his lov'd coast he roll'd his eyes in vain,
 Till dimm'd with rising grief, they stream'd again.

Now graceful seated on her shining throne,
 To Hermes thus the nymph divine begun. 110

God of the golden wand! on what behest
 Arriv'st thou here, an unexpected guest?
 Lov'd as thou art, thy free injunctions lay;
 'Tis mine, with joy and duty to obey.
 Till now a stranger, in a happy hour 115
 Approach, and taste the dainties of my bow'r.

Thus having spoke, the nymph the table spread,
 (Ambrosial cates, with nectar rosy-red)
 Hermes the hospitable rite partook,
 Divine refection! then recruited, spoke, 120

What mov'd this journey from my native sky,
 A Goddess asks, nor can a God deny:
 Hear then the truth. By mighty Jove's command
 Unwilling, have I trod this pleasing land;
 For who, self-mov'd with weary wing wou'd sweep 125
 Such length of ocean and unmeasur'd deep:
 A world of waters! far from all the ways
 Where men frequent, or sacred altars blaze?
 But to Jove's will submission we must pay;
 What pow'r so great, to dare to disobey? 130
 A man, he says, a man resides with thee,
 Of all his kind most worn with misery:

fer, he entertains himself with his own melancholy reflections, sitting in solitude upon the sea-shore.

Book V. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 233

The Greeks (whose arms for nine long years employ'd

Their force on Ilion, in the tenth destroy'd)

At length embarking in a luckless hour, 135

With conquest proud, incens'd Minerva's pow'r:

Hence on the guilty race her vengeance hurl'd

With storms pursu'd them thro' the liquid world.

There all his vessels sunk beneath the wave! 139

There all his dear companions found their grave!

Sav'd from the jaws of death by heav'n's decree,

The tempest drove him to these shores and thee.

Him, Jove now orders to his native lands

Straight to dismiss; so destiny commands:

Impatient fate his near return attends, 145

And calls him to his country, and his friends.

Ev'n to her inmost soul the Goddess shook;

Then thus her anguish and her passion broke.

Ungracious Gods! with spite and envy curst!

Still to your own ætherial race the worst! 150

Ye envy mortal and immortal joy,

And love, the only sweet of life, destroy.

Did ever Goddess by her charms engage

A favour'd mortal, and not feel your rage?

So when Aurora fought Orion's love, 155

Her joys disturb'd your blissful hours above,

v. 155. *Orion.*] The love of Calypso to Ulysses might seem too bold a fiction, and contrary to all credibility, Ulysses being a mortal, and she a Goddess: Homer therefore to soften the relation, brings in instances of the like passion, in Orion and Iasion; and by this he fully justifies

Till in Ortygia, Dian's winged dart
 Had pierc'd the hapless hunter to the heart.
 So when the covert of the thrice-ear'd field
 Saw stately Ceres to her passion yield, 160.
 Scarce could Iäson taste her heav'nly charms,
 But Jove's swift lightning scorch'd him in her arms.
 And is it now my turn, ye mighty pow'rs!
 Am I the envy of your blisful bow'rs?
 A man, an outcast to the storm and wave, 165
 It was my crime to pity, and to save;

his own conduct, the poet being at liberty to make use of any prevailing story, though it were all fable and fiction.

But why should the death of Orion be here ascribed to Diana; whereas in other places she is said to exercise her power only over women? The reason is, she slew him for offering violence to her chastity; for though Homer be silent about his crime, yet Horace relates it.

— — — “ Integræ

“ Tentator Orion Dianæ

“ Virgineâ domitus sagittâ.”

Eustathius gives another reason why Aurora is said to be in love with Orion. He was a great hunter, as appears from the eleventh book of the Odyssey; and the morning or Aurora is most favourable to those diversions.

v. 161. *Scarce could Iäson, &c.*] Ceres is here understood allegorically, to signify the earth; Iäson was a great husbandman, and consequently Ceres may easily be feigned to be in love with him: the thunderbolt with which he is slain signifies the excess of heat, which frequently disappoints the hopes of the labourer. *Eustathius.*

v. 165. *A man, an outcast to the storm and wave,
 It was my crime to pity, and to save, &c.*]

Homer in this speech of Calypso shews very naturally

When he who thunders rent his bark in twain,
 And sunk his brave companions in the main.
 Alone, abandon'd, in mid-ocean tost,
 The sport of winds, and driv'n from ev'ry coast, 170
 Hither this man of miseries I led,
 Receiv'd the friendless, and the hungry fed ;
 Nay promis'd (vainly promis'd !) to bestow
 Immortal life, exempt from age and woe. 174
 'Tis past——and Jove decrees he shall remove ;
 Gods as we are, we are but slaves to Jove.
 Go then he may ; (he must, if He ordain,
 Try all those dangers, all those deeps, again)

how passion misguides the understanding. She views her own cause in the most advantageous, but false light, and thence concludes, that Jupiter offers a piece of injustice in commanding the departure of Ulysses : she tells Mercury, that it is she who had preserved his life, who had entertained him with affection, and offered him immortality ; and would Jupiter thus repay her tenderness to Ulysses ? Would Jupiter force him from a place where nothing was wanting to his happiness, and expose him again to the like dangers from which she had preserved him ? this was an act of cruelty. But on the contrary, she speaks not one word concerning the truth of the cause : viz. that she offered violence to the inclinations of Ulysses ; that she made him miserable by detaining him, not only from his wife, but from his whole dominions ; and never considers that Jupiter is just in delivering him from his captivity. This is a very lively, though unhappy picture of human nature, which is too apt to fall into error, and then endeavours to justify an error by a seeming reason. *Dacier.*

But never, never shall Calypso send
 To toils like these, her husband and her friend. 180
 What ships have I, what sailors to convey,
 What oars to cut the long laborious way?
 Yet, I'll direct the safest means to go:
 That last advice is all I can bestow.

To her, the Pow'r who bears the charming rod,
 Dismiss the Man, nor irritate the God; 186
 Prevent the rage of him who reigns above,
 For what so dreadful as the wrath of Jove?
 Thus having said, he cut the cleaving sky,
 And in a moment vanish'd from her eye. 190
 The nymph, obedient to divine command,
 To seek Ulysses pac'd along the sand.
 Him pensive on the lonely beach she found,
 With streaming eyes in briny torrents drown'd,
 And only pining for his native shore: 195
 For now the soft enchantress pleas'd no more:
 For now, reluctant, and constrain'd by charms,
 Absent he lay in her desiring arms,

v. 198. *Absent he lay in her desiring arms.*] This passage has fallen under the severe censure of the criticks; they condemn it as an act of conjugal infidelity, and a breach of morality in Ulysses: it would be sufficient to answer, that a poet is not obliged to draw a perfect character in the person of his hero: perfection is not to be found in human life, and consequently ought not to be ascribed to it in poetry: neither Achilles nor Æneas are perfect characters: Æneas in particular, is as guilty, with respect to Dido, in the desertion of her, (for Virgil tells us they

In slumber wore the heavy night away,
On rocks and shores consum'd the tedious day ;
There sat all desolate, and sigh'd alone, 201
With echoing sorrows made the mountains groan,
And roll'd his eyes o'er all the restless main,
'Till dimm'd with rising grief, they stream'd again.

Here, on the musing mood the Goddess prest,
Approaching soft ; and thus the chief addrest. 206
Unhappy man ! to waiving woes a prey,
No more in sorrows languish life away :
Free as the winds I give thee now to rove—
Go, fell the timber of yon' lofty grove, 210
And form a raft, and build the rising ship,
Sublime to bear thee o'er the gloomy deep.
To store the vessel let the care be mine,
With water from the rock, and rosy wine,

were married, *connubio jungam stabili*) as Ulysses can be imagined to be by the most severe critick, with respect to Calypso.

But those who have blamed this passage, form their judgments from the morality of these ages, and not from the theology of the ancients : Polygamy was then allowed and even concubinage, without being esteemed any breach of conjugal fidelity : if this be not admitted, the heathen Gods are as guilty as the heathen heroes, and Jupiter and Ulysses are equally criminals.

This very passage shews the sincere affection which Ulysses retained for his wife Penelope ; even a Goddess cannot persuade him to forget her ; his person is in the power of Calypso, but his heart is with Penelope. Tully had this book of Homer in his thought when he said of Ulysses, *Vetulam suam prætulit immortalitati.*

238 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book V.

And life-sustaining bread, and fair array, 215
 And prosp'rous gales to waft thee on the way.
 These if the Gods with my desires comply,
 (The Gods alas more mighty far than I,
 And better skill'd in dark events to come)
 In peace shall land thee at thy native home. 220
 With sighs, Ulysses heard the words she spoke,
 Then thus his melancholy silence broke.
 Some other motive, Goddess! sways thy mind,
 (Some close design, or turn of womankind)
 Nor my return the end, nor this the way, 225
 On a slight raft to pass the swelling sea
 Huge, horrid, vast! where scarce in safety sails
 The best-built ship, tho' Jove inspire the gales.
 The bold proposal how shall I fulfill;
 Dark as I am, unconscious of thy will? 230

v. 222. *Then thus his melancholy silence broke.*] It may be asked what occasions this conduct in Ulysses? He has long been desirous to return to his country; why then his melancholy at the proposal of it? this proceeds from his apprehensions of insincerity in Calypso: he had long been unable to obtain his dismissal with the most urgent intreaties: this voluntary kindness therefore seems suspicious. He is ignorant that Jupiter had commanded his departure, and therefore fears lest his obstinate desire of leaving her should have provoked her to destroy him, under a shew of complying with his inclinations. This is an instance that Ulysses is not only wise in extricating himself from difficulties, but cautious in guarding against dangers.

Book V. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 239

Swear then thou mean'st not what my soul forebodes;
Swear by the solemn oath that binds the Gods.

Him, while he spoke, with smiles Calypso ey'd,
And gently grasp'd his hand, and thus reply'd.
This shews thee, friend, by old experience taught, 235
And learn'd in all the wiles of human thought.
How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise?
But hear, oh earth, and hear ye sacred skies!
And thou, oh Styx! whose formidable floods
Glide thro' the shades, and bind th' attesting Gods!
No form'd design, no meditated end 241
Lurks in the counsel of thy faithful friend;
Kind the persuasion, and sincere my aim;
The same my practice, were my fate the same.
Heav'n has not curst me with a heart of steel, 245
But giv'n the sense, to pity, and to feel.

Thus having said, the Goddess march'd before:
He trod her footsteps in the sandy shore.

v. 238. *But hear, oh earth, and hear, ye sacred skies!*
The oath of Calypso is introduced with the utmost solemnity. Rapin allows it to be an instance of true sublimity. The ancients attested all nature in their oaths, that all nature might conspire to punish their perjuries. Virgil has imitated this passage, but has not copied the full beauty of the original.

“*Esto nunc sol testis, & hæc mihi terra precanti.*”

It is the remark of Grotius, that the like expression is found in Deuteronomy, *Hear, oh ye heavens, the words that I speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.* Which may almost literally be rendered by this verse of Homer.

Ἰστω νυν τόδε γαῖα, καὶ ἑβανὶς οὐρὸς ὑπερθεῖν.

At the cool cave arriv'd, they took their state;
 He fill'd the throne where Mercury had sat, 250
 For him, the nymph a rich repast ordains,
 Such as the mortal life of man sustains;
 Before herself were plac'd the cates divine,
 Ambrosial banquet, and celestial wine.
 Their hunger satiate, and their thirst repress, 255
 Thus spoke Calypso to her god-like guest.
 Ulysses! (with a sigh she thus began)
 O sprung from Gods! in wisdom more than man.

v. 251. *For him, the nymph a rich repast ordains.*] The passion of love is no where described in all Homer but in this passage between Calypso and Ulysses; and we find that the poet is not unsuccessful in drawing the tender, as well as the fiercer passions. This seemingly trifling circumstance is an instance of it; love delights to oblige, and the least offices receive a value from the person who performs them: this is the reason why Calypso serves Ulysses with her own hands: her damsels attend her, but love makes it a pleasure to her to attend Ulysses. *Eustathius.*

Calypso shews more fondness for Ulysses, than Ulysses for Calypso: indeed Ulysses had been no less than seven years in the favour of that Goddess; it was a kind of matrimony, and husbands are not altogether so fond as lovers. But the true reason is, a more tender behaviour had been contrary to the character of Ulysses; it is necessary that his stay should be by constraint, that he should be continually endeavouring to return to his own country; and consequently to have discovered too great a degree of satisfaction in any thing during his absence, had outraged his character. His return is the main hinge upon which the whole *Odyssey* turns, and therefore no pleasure, not even a Goddess, ought to divert him from it.

Book V. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 241

Is then thy home the passion of thy heart ?
Thus wilt thou leave me, are we thus to part ? 260
Farewel ! and ever joyful may'st thou be,
Nor break the transport with one thought of me.
But ah Ulysses ! wert thou giv'n to know
What Fate yet dooms thee, yet, to undergo ;
Thy heart might settle in this scene of ease, 265
And ev'n these slighted charms might learn to please.
A willing Goddess and immortal life,
Might banish from thy mind an absent wife.
Am I inferiour to a mortal dame ?
Less soft my feature, less august my frame ? 270
Or shall the daughters of mankind compare
Their earth-born beauties with the heav'nly fair ?
Alas ! for this (the prudent man replies)
Against Ulysses shall thy anger rise ?
Lov'd and ador'd, oh Goddess as thou art, 275
Forgive the weakness of a human heart.

v. 263. *But ah Ulysses ! wert thou given to know
What Fate yet dooms thee.]*

This is another instance of the tyranny of the passion of love : Calypso had received a command to dismiss Ulysses ; Mercury had laid before her the fatal consequences of her refusal, and she had promised to send him away ; but her love here again prevails over her reason : she frames excuses still to detain him, and though she dares not keep him, she knows not how to part with him. This is a true picture of nature ; love this moment resolves, the next breaks these resolutions : she had promised to obey Jupiter, in not detaining Ulysses ; but she endeavours to persuade Ulysses not to go away.

Tho' well I see thy graces far above
 The dear, tho' mortal, object of my love,
 Of youth eternal well the diff'rence know,
 And the short date of fading charms below ; 280
 Yet ev'ry day, while absent thus I roam,
 I languish to return, and die at home.
 Whate'er the Gods shall destine me to bear
 In the black ocean, or the wat'ry war,
 'Tis mine to master with a constant mind ; 285
 Enur'd to perils, to the worst resign'd.
 By seas, by wars, so many dangers run ;
 Still I can suffer : their high will be done !

Thus while he spoke, the beamy fun descends,
 And rising night her friendly shade extends. 290
 To the close grot the lonely pair remove,
 And slept delighted with the gifts of love.
 When rosy morning call'd them from their rest,
 Ulysses rob'd him in the cloak and vest.
 The nymph's fair head a veil transparent grac'd,
 Her swelling loins a radiant zone embrac'd 296
 With flow'rs of gold : an under robe, unbound,
 In snowy waves flow'd glitt'ring on the ground.

v. 277. *Tho' well I see thy graces far above*

The dear, tho' mortal, object of my love.]

Ulysses shews great address in this answer to Calypso ; he softens the severity of it, by first asking a favourable acceptance of what he is about to say ; he calls her his adored Goddess, and places Penelope in every degree below the perfections of Calypso. As it is the nature of women not to endure a rival, Ulysses assigns the desire of his return to another cause, than the love of Penelope, and ascribes it solely to the love he bears his country. *Eustathius.*

Forth issuing thus, she gave him first to wield
 A weighty ax with truest temper steel'd, 300
 And double-edg'd; the handle smooth and plain,
 Wrought of the clouded olive's easy grain;
 And next, a wedge to drive with sweepy sway:
 Then to the neighbouring forest led the way.
 On the lone island's utmost verge there stood 305
 Of poplars, pines, and firs, a lofty wood,
 Whose leafless summits to the skies aspire,
 Scorch'd by the sun, or fear'd by heav'nly fire:
 (Already dry'd.) These pointing out to view,
 The nymph just shew'd him, and with tears with-
 drew. 310

Now toils the hero; trees on trees o'erthrown
 Fall crackling round him, and the forest groan:
 Sudden, full twenty on the plain are strow'd,
 And lopp'd, and lighten'd of their branchy load.

v. 311, &c. *Ulysses builds his ship.*] This passage has fallen under censure, as outraging all probability: Rapin believes it to be impossible for one man alone to build so compleat a vessel in the compass of four days; and perhaps the same opinion might lead Boslu into a mistake, who allows twenty days to Ulysses in building it; he applies the word εἰκοσι, or *twenty*, to the days, which ought to be applied to the trees; δένδρεα is understood, for the poet immediately after declares that the whole was compleated in the space of four days; neither is there any thing incredible in the description. I have observed already that this vessel is but Σχεῖνα, a *float*, or *raft*; it is true, Ulysses cuts down twenty trees to build it; this may seem too great a provision of materials for so small an undertaking: but

At equal angles these dispos'd to join, 315
 He smooth'd and squar'd 'em, by the rule and line.
 (The wimbles for the work Calypso found)
 With those he pierc'd 'em, and with clinchers bound.

why should we imagine these to be large trees? The description plainly shews the contrary, for it had been impossible to have felled twenty large trees in the space of four days, much more to have built a vessel proportionable to such materials: but the vessel was but small, and consequently such were the trees. Homer calls these *dry trees*; this is not inserted without reason, for green wood is unfit for navigation.

Homer in this passage shews his skill in mechanics; a shipwright could not have described a vessel more exactly; but what is chiefly valuable is the insight it gives us to what degree this art of ship-building was then arrived: we find likewise what use navigators made of astronomy in those ages: so that this passage deserves a double regard, as a fine piece of poetry, and a valuable remain of antiquity.

v. 317. (*The wimbles for the work Calypso found.*) And

v. 329. *Thy loom, Calypso! for the future sails
 Supply'd the cloth.*]

It is remarkable that Calypso brings the tools to Ulysses at several times: this is another instance of the nature of love; it seeks opportunities to be in the company of the beloved person. Calypso is an instance of it: she frequently goes away, and frequently returns: she delays the time, by not bringing all the implements at once to Ulysses; so that though she cannot divert him from the resolutions of leaving her, yet she protracts his stay.

It may be necessary to make some observation in general upon this passage of Calypso and Ulysses. Mr. Dryden has been very severe upon it. "What are the tears, says he, of Calypso for being left, to the fury and death of Dido? Where is there the whole process of her passion, and all its violent effects to be found, in the languishing

Long and capacious as a shipwright forms 319
Some bark's broad bottom to out-ride the storms,

"episode of the *Odyssey*?" Much may be said in vindication of Homer; there is a wide difference between the characters of Dido and Calypso; Calypso is a Goddess, and consequently not liable to the same passions, as an enraged woman: yet disappointed love being always an outrageous passion, Homer makes her break out into blasphemies against Jupiter and all the Gods. "But the same process of love is not found in Homer as in Virgil;" it is true, and Homer had been very injudicious if he had inserted it. The time allows it not; it was necessary for Homer to describe the conclusion of Calypso's passion, not the beginning or process of it. It was necessary to carry on the main design of the poem, viz. the departure of Ulysses, in order to his re-establishment; and not amuse the reader with a detail of a passion that was so far from contributing to the end of the poem, that it was the greatest impediment to it. If the poet had found an enlargement necessary to his design, had he attempted a full description of the passion, and then failed, Mr. Dryden's criticism had been judicious. Virgil had a fair opportunity to expatiate, nay, the occasion required it, inasmuch as the love of Dido contributed to the design of the poem; it brought about her assistance to Æneas, and the preservation of his companions: and consequently the copiousness of Virgil is as judicious as the conciseness of Homer. I allow Virgil's to be a master-piece: perhaps no images are more happily drawn in all that poet; but the passages in the two authors are not similar, and consequently admit of no comparison: would it not have been insufferable in Homer, to have stepped seven years backward, to describe the process of Calypso's passion, when the very nature of the poem requires that Ulysses should immediately return to his own country? ought the action to be sus-

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So large he built the raft : then ribb'd it strong
 From space to space, and nail'd the planks along ;
 These form'd the sides : the deck he fashion'd last ;
 Then o'er the vessel rais'd the taper mast,
 With crossing sail-yards dancing in the wind ; 325
 And to the helm the guiding rudder join'd.
 (With yielding osiers fenc'd, to break the force
 Of surging waves, and steer the steady course)
 Thy loom, Calypso ! for the future sails
 Supply the cloth, capacious of the gales. 330
 With stays and cordage last he rigg'd the ship,
 And, roll'd on levers, lanch'd her in the deep.

Four days were past, and now the work compleat,
 Shone the fifth morn : when from her sacred seat
 The nymph dismiss him, (od'rous garments giv'n) 335
 And bath'd in fragrant oils that breath'd of heav'n :
 Then fill'd two goat-skins with her hands divine,
 With water one, and one with fable wine :
 Of ev'ry kind, provisions heav'd aboard ;
 And the full decks with copious viands stor'd. 340
 The Goddess, last, a gentle breeze supplies,
 To curl old ocean, and to warm the skies.

pended for a fine description ? But an opposite conduct was judicious in both the poets, and therefore Virgil is commendable for giving us the whole process of a love-passion in Dido, Homer for only relating the conclusion of it in Calypso. I will only add, that Virgil has borrowed his machinery from Homer, and that the departure of Æneas and Ulysses is brought about by the command of Jupiter, and the descent of Mercury.

And now rejoicing in the prosp'rous gales,
 With beating heart Ulysses spreads his sails ;
 Plac'd at the helm he sat, and mark'd the skies,
 Nor clos'd in sleep his ever-watchful eyes. 346
 There view'd the Pleiads, and the northern team,
 And great Orion's more refulgent beam,
 To which, around the axle of the sky
 The bear revolving, points his golden eye : 350
 Who shines exalted on th' ætherial plain,
 Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.
 Far on the left those radiant fires to keep
 The nymph directed, as he sail'd the deep.
 Full sev'nteen nights he cut the foamy way ; 355
 The distant land appear'd the following day :

v. 344. — — — *Ulysses spreads his sails.*] It is observable that the poet passes over the parting of Calypso and Ulysses in silence; he leaves it to be imagined by the reader, and prosecutes his main action. Nothing but a cold compliment could have proceeded from Ulysses, he being overjoyed at the prospect of returning to his country: it was therefore judicious in Homer to omit the relation; and not draw Calypso in tears, and Ulysses in a transport of joy. Besides, it was necessary to shorten the episode: the commands of Jupiter were immediately to be obeyed; and the story being now turned to Ulysses, it was requisite to put him immediately upon action, and describe him endeavouring to re-establish his own affairs, which is the whole design of the Odyssey.

v. 355. *Full sev'nteen nights he cut the foamy way.*] It may seem incredible that one person should be able to manage a vessel seventeen days without any assistance; but

Then swell'd to fight Phæacia's dusky coast,
 And woody mountains, half in vapours lost:
 That lay before him, indistinct and vast,
 Like a broad shield amid the wat'ry waste. 360

Eustathius vindicates Homer by an instance that very much resembles this of Ulysses. A certain Pamphylian being taken prisoner, and carried to Tamiathis (afterwards Damietta) in Ægypt, continued there several years; but being continually desirous to return to his country, he pretends a skill in sea affairs: this succeeds, and he is immediately employed in maritime business, and permitted the liberty to follow it according to his own inclination, without any inspection. He made use of this opportunity, and furnishing himself with a sail, and provisions for a long voyage, committed himself to the sea all alone; he crossed that vast extent of waters that lies between Ægypt and Pamphylia, and arrived safely in his own country: in memory of this prodigious event he changed his name, and was called *Μονοπάρης*, or the *sole sailor*; and the family was not extinct in the days of Eustathius.

It may not be improper to observe, that this description of Ulysses sailing alone, is a demonstration of the smallness of his vessel; for it is impossible that a large one could be managed by a single person. It is indeed said that twenty trees were taken down for the vessel, but this does not imply that all the trees were made use of, but only so much of them as was necessary to his purpose.

v 360. *Like a broad shield amid the wat'ry waste.*] This expression gives a very lively idea of an island of small extent, that is of a form more long than large: Aristarchus, instead of *πίλον*, writes *ἔγινον*, or resembling a *fig*; others tell us, that *πίλον* is used by the Illyrians to signify *ἄχλυν*, or a *mist*: this likewise very well represents the first appearance of land to those that sail at a distance; it ap-

But him, thus voyaging the deeps below,
 From far, on Solymé's aerial brow,
 The king of ocean saw, and seeing burn'd,
 (From Æthiopia's happy climes return'd)
 The raging monarch shook his azure head, 365
 And thus in secret to his soul he said.

Heav'ns! how uncertain are the Pow'rs on high?
 Is then revers'd the sentence of the sky,

appears indistinct and confused, or as it is here expressed, like a mist. *Eustathius*.

v. 362. *From Solyme's aerial brow.*] There is some difficulty in this passage. Strabo, as Eustathius observes, affirms that the expression of Neptune's seeing Ulysses from the mountain of Solymé, is to be taken in a general sense, and not to denote the Solymæan mountains in Pisidia; but other eastern mountains that bear the same appellation. In propriety, the Solymæans inhabit the summits of mount Taurus, from Lycia even to Pisidia; these were very distant from the passage of Neptune from the Æthiopians, and consequently could not be the mountains intended by Homer; we must therefore have recourse to the preceding assertion of Strabo, for a solution of the difficulty. Dacier endeavours to explain it another way; who knows, says she, but that the name of Solymæan was anciently extended to all very elevated mountains? Bochart affirms, that the word Solyme is derived from the Hebrew *selem*, or *darkness*; why then might not this be a general appellation? But this is all conjecture, and it is much more probable, that such a name should be given to some mountains by way of distinction and emphatically, from some peculiar and extraordinary quality; than extend itself to all very lofty mountains, which could only introduce confusion and error.

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In one man's favour ; while a distant guest
 I shar'd secure the Æthiopian feast ? 370
 Behold how near Phæacia's land he draws !
 The land, affix'd by Fate's eternal laws
 To end his toils. Is then our anger vain ?
 No ; if this sceptre yet commands the main.

He spoke, and high the forky trident hurl'd, 375
 Rolls clouds on clouds, and stirs the wat'ry world,
 At once the face of earth and sea deforms,
 Swells all the winds, and rouses all the storms.
 Down rush'd the night : east, west, together roar ;
 And south, and north, roll mountains to the shore ;
 Then shook the hero, to despair resign'd, 381
 And question'd thus his yet unconquer'd mind.

Wretch that I am ! what farther fates attend
 This life of toils, and what my destin'd end ?
 Too well alas ! the island Goddess knew, 385
 On the black sea what perils should ensue.
 New horrors now this destin'd head enclose ;
 Unfill'd is yet the measure of my woes ;
 With what a cloud the brows of heav'n are crown'd ?
 What raging winds ? what roaring waters round ?
 'Tis Jove himself the swelling tempest rears ; 391
 Death, present death on ev'ry side appears.
 Happy ! thrice happy ! who in battle slain,
 Prest, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain :

v. 293. *Happy ! thrice happy ! who in battle slain,
 Prest, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain.]*

Plutarch in his *Symposiacks* relates a memorable story con-

Oh! had I dy'd before that well-fought wall; 395
Had some distinguish'd day renown'd my fall;

cerning Memmius, the Roman general: when he had sacked the city Corinth, and made slaves of those who survived the ruin of it, he commanded one of the youths of a liberal education to write down some sentence in his presence, according to his own inclinations. The youth immediately wrote this passage from Homer.

Happy! thrice happy! who, in battle slain,
Prest, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain.

Memmius immediately burst into tears, and gave the youth and all his relations their liberty.

Virgil has translated this passage in the first book of his *Æneis*. The storm and the behaviour of *Æneas* are copied exactly from it. The storm, in both the poets, is described concisely, but the images are full of terour: Homer leads the way, and Virgil treads in his steps without any deviation. Ulysses falls into lamentation, so does *Æneas*: Ulysses wishes he had found a nobler death, so does *Æneas*: this discovers a bravery of spirit, they lament not that they are to die, but only the inglorious manner of it. This fully answers an objection that has been made both against Homer and Virgil, who have been blamed for describing their heroes with such an air of mean-spiritedness. Drowning was esteemed by the ancients an accursed death, as it deprived their bodies of the rites of sepulture; it is therefore no wonder that this kind of death was greatly dreaded, since it barred their entrance into the happy regions of the dead for many hundreds of years.

(Such as was that, when show'rs of jav'lins fled
 From conq'ring Troy around Achilles dead)
 All Greece had paid me solemn fun'ral's then,
 And spread my glory with the sons of men. 400
 A shameful fate now hides my hapless head,
 Un-wept, un-noted, and for ever dead !

A mighty wave rush'd o'er him as he spoke,
 The raft it cover'd, and the mast it broke ; 404
 Swept from the deck, and from the rudder torn,
 Far on the swelling surge the chief was borne :
 While by the howling tempest rent in twain
 Flew sail and sail-yards rattling o'er the main.
 Long press'd, he heav'd beneath the weighty wave,
 Clogg'd by the cumbrous vest Calypso gave : 410
 At length emerging from his nostrils wide
 And gushing mouth, effus'd the briny tide,

v. 397. (*Such as was that when show'rs of jav'lins fled
 From conq'ring Troy around Achilles dead.*)]

These words have relation to an action, no where described in the Iliad or Odyssey. When Achilles was slain by the treachery of Paris, the Trojans made a sally to gain his body, but Ulysses carried it off upon his shoulders, while Ajax protected him with his shield. The war of Troy is not the subject of the Iliad, and therefore relates not the death of Achilles ; but, as Longinus remarks, he inserts many actions in the Odyssey which are the sequel of the story of the Iliad. This conduct has a very happy effect ; he aggrandizes the character of Ulysses by these short histories, and has found out the way to make him praise himself, without vanity.

Ev'n then not mindless of his last retreat,
 He seiz'd the raft, and leapt into his seat, 414
 Strong with the fear of death. The rolling flood
 Now here, now there, impell'd the floating wood.
 As when a heap of gather'd thorns is cast
 Now to, now fro, before th' autumnal blast;
 Together clung, it rolls around the field;
 So roll'd the float, and so its texture held: 420
 And now the south, and now the north, bear sway, }
 And now the east the foamy floods obey, }
 And now the west-wind whirls it o'er the sea.
 The wand'ring chief, with toils on toils oppress'd,
 Leucothea saw, and pity touch'd her breast: 425

v. 424. *The wand'ring chief, with toils on toils oppress'd,
 Leucothea saw, and pity touch'd her breast.]*

It is not probable that Ulysses could escape so great a danger by his own strength alone; and therefore the poet introduces Leucothea to assist in his preservation. But it may be asked, if this is not contradictory to the command of Jupiter in the beginning of the book? Ulysses is there forbid all assistance either from men or Gods; whence then is it that Leucothea preserves him? The former passage is to be understood to imply an interdiction only of all assistance, until Ulysses was shipwrecked; he was to suffer, not to die: thus Pallas afterwards calms the storm: she may be imagined to have a power over the winds, as she is the daughter of Jupiter, who denotes the air, according to the observation of Eustathius: here Leucothea is very properly introduced to preserve Ulysses; she is a Sea-Goddess, and had been a mortal, and therefore interests herself in the cause of a mortal.

(Herself a mortal once, of Cadmus' strain,
But now an azure sister of the main)
Swift as a sea-mew springing from the flood,
All radiant on the raft the Goddess stood :
Then thus address'd him. Thou, whom heav'n de-
crees

430

To Neptune's wrath, stern tyrant of the seas,
(Unequal contest :) not his rage and pow'r,
Great as he is, such virtue shall devour.
What I suggest thy wisdom will perform ;
For sake thy float, and leave it to the storm ; 435
Strip off thy garments ; Neptune's fury brave
With naked strength, and plunge into the wave.
To reach Phæacia all thy nerves extend,
There Fate decrees thy miseries shall end.
This heav'nly scarf beneath thy bosom bind, 440
And live ; give all thy terrors to the wind.

v. 440. *This heav'nly scarf beneath thy bosom bind.*] This passage may seem extraordinary, and the poet be thought to preserve Ulysses by incredible means. What virtue could there be in this scarf against the violence of storms? Eustathius very well answers this objection. It is evident that the belief of the power of amulets or charms prevailed in the times of Homer; thus Moly is used by Ulysses, as a preservative against fascination, and some charm may be supposed to be implied in the *zone* or *ceffus* of Venus. Thus Ulysses may be imagined to have worn a scarf, or cincture, as a preservative against the perils of the sea. They consecrated antiently *votiva*, as tablets, &c. in the temples of their Gods: so Ulysses, wearing a zone consecrated to Leucothea, may be said to receive it from

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Soon as thy arms the happy shore shall gain,
Return the gift, and cast it in the main;
Observe my orders, and with heed obey,
Cast it far off, and turn thy eyes away. 445

With that, her hand the sacred veil bestows,
Then down the deeps she div'd from whence she
rose;

A moment snatch'd the shining form away,
And all was cover'd with the curling sea. 449

Struck with amaze, yet still to doubt inclin'd,
He stands suspended, and explores his mind.
What shall I do? unhappy me! who knows
But other Gods intend me other woes?
Whoe'er thou art, I shall not blindly join
Thy pleaded reason, but consult with mine: 455

the hands of that Goddess. Eustathius observes, that Leucothea did not appear in the form of a bird, for then how should she speak, or how bring this cincture or scarf? The expression has relation only to the manner of her rising out of the sea, and descending into it; the action, not the person, is intended to be represented. Thus Minerva is said in the *Odyssey*, *to fly away*, *θεῖς ὡς ἀνέπαια*, not in the *form*, but with the *swiftness* of an eagle. Most of the translators have rendered this passage ridiculously; they describe her in the real form of a sea-fowl, though she speaks, and gives her scarf. So the version of Hobbs:

“ She spoke, in figure of a water-hen.”

V. 454. — — — *I shall not blindly join*
Thy pleaded reason — — —]

Eustathius observes, that this passage is a lesson to instruct

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For scarce in ken appears that distant isle
 Thy voice foretels me shall conclude my toil.
 Thus then I judge ; while yet the planks sustain
 The wild waves fury, here I fix'd remain :
 But when their texture to the tempest yields, 460
 I lanch advent'rous on the liquid fields,
 Join to the help of Gods the strength of man,
 And take this method, since the best I can.

While thus his thoughts an anxious council hold,
 The raging God a wat'ry mountain roll'd ; 465
 Like a black sheet the whelming billow spread,
 Burst o'er the float, and thunder'd on his head.

us, that second reflections are preferable to our first thoughts ; and the poet maintains the character of Ulysses by describing him thus doubtful and cautious. But is not Ulysses too incredulous, who will not believe a Goddess ? and disobedient to her, by not committing himself to the seas ? Leucothea does not confine Ulysses to an immediate compliance with her injunctions : she commands him to forsake the raft, but leaves the time to his own discretion : and Ulysses might very justly be somewhat incredulous, when he knew that Neptune was his enemy, and contriving his destruction. The doubts therefore of Ulysses are the doubts of a wise man : but then, is not Ulysses described with a greater degree of prudence than the Goddess ? She commands him to leave the raft, he chuses to make use of it till he arrives nearer the shores. Eustathius directly ascribes more wisdom to Ulysses than to Leucothea. This may appear too partial ; it is sufficient to observe, that the command of Leucothea was general, and left the manner of it to his own prudence.

Book V. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 257

Planks, beams, disparted fly : the scatter'd wood
Rolls diverse, and in fragments strows the flood.
So the rude Boreas, o'er the field new-shorn, 470
Tosses and drives the scatter'd heaps of corn.

And now a single beam the chief bestrides ;
There, pois'd a while above the bounding tides,
His limbs dis-cumbers of the clinging vest,
And binds the sacred cincture round his breast : 475
Then prone on ocean in a moment flung,
Stretch'd wide his eager arms, and shot the seas along.
All naked now, on heaving billows laid,
Stern Neptune ey'd him, and contemptuous said :

Go, learn'd in woes, and other woes essay ! 480
Go, wander helpless on the wat'ry way :
Thus, thus find out the destin'd shore, and then
(If Jove ordains it) mix with happier men.
Whate'er thy fate, the ills our wrath could raise
Shall last remember'd in thy best of days. 485

This said, his sea-green steeds divide the foam,
And reach high Ægæ and the tow'ry dome.

Now, scarce withdrawn the fierce earth-shaking
pow'r,
Jove's daughter Pallas watch'd the fav'ring hour,
Back to their caves she bade the winds to fly, 490
And hush'd the blust'ring brethren of the sky.
The drier blasts alone of Boreas sway,
And bear him soft on broken waves away ;
With gentle force impelling to that shore,
Where Fate has destin'd he shall toil no more. 495

And now two nights, and now two days were past,
 Since wide he wander'd on the wat'ry waste:
 Heav'd on the surge with intermitting breath,
 And hourly panting in the arms of death.
 The third fair morn now blaz'd upon the main ;
 Then glassy smooth lay all the liquid plain, 501
 The winds were hush'd, the billows scarcely curl'd,
 And a dead silence still'd the wat'ry world.
 When lifted on a ridgy wave he spies
 The land at distance, and with sharpen'd eyes. 505
 As pious children joy with vast delight
 When a lov'd fire revives before their sight,

v. 496. *And now two nights, and now two days were past.*] It may be thought incredible that any person should be able to contend so long with a violent storm, and at last survive it: it is allowed that this could scarce be done by the natural strength of Ulysses; but the poet has softened the narration, by ascribing his preservation to the cincture of Leucothea. The poet likewise very judiciously removes Neptune, that Ulysses may not appear to be preserved against the power of that God; and to reconcile it entirely to credibility, he introduces Pallas, who calms the winds and composes the waves, to make way for his preservation.

v. 506. *As pious children joy with vast delight.*] This is a very beautiful comparison, and well adapted to the occasion. We mistake the intention of it, as Eustathius observes, if we imagine that Homer intended to compare the person of Ulysses to these children: it is introduced solely to express the joy which he conceives at the sight of land: if we look upon it in any other view, the resemblance is lost; for the children suffer not themselves, but Ulysses is

Book V. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 259

(Who ling'ring long has call'd on death in vain,
 Fixt by some dæmon to the bed of pain,
 'Till Heav'n by miracle his life restore) 510
 So joys Ulysses at the appearing shore;
 And fees (and labours onward as he fees)
 The rising forests, and the tufted trees.

in the utmost distress. These images drawn from common life are particularly affecting; they have relation to every man, as every man may possibly be in such circumstances: other images may be more noble, and yet less pleasing: they may raise our admiration, but these engage our affections.

v. 509. *Fixt by some dæmon to the bed of pain.*] It was a prevailing opinion among the ancients, that the Gods were the authors of all diseases incident to mankind. Hippocrates himself confesses that he had found some distempers, in which the hand of the Gods was manifest, *θεῶν τι*, as Dacier observes. In this place this assertion has a peculiar beauty, it shews that the malady was not contracted by any vice of the father, but inflicted by an evil dæmon. Nothing is more evident, than that every person was supposed by the ancients to have a good and a bad dæmon attending him; what the Greeks called a dæmon, the Romans named a genius. I confess that this is no where directly affirmed in Homer, but as Plutarch observes, it is plainly intimated. In the second book of the Iliad the word is used both in a good and bad sense; when Ulysses addresses himself to the generals of the army, he says *Δαιμόνιε*, in the better sense; and immediately after he uses it to denote a coward,

Δαιμόνι' ἀτρέμας ἦσο.

This is a strong evidence, that the notion of a good and bad dæmon was believed in the days of Homer.

And now, as near approaching as the sound
 Of human voice the list'ning ear may wound, 515
 Amidst the rocks he hears a hollow roar
 Of murm'ring surges breaking on the shore :
 Nor peaceful port was there, nor winding bay,
 To shield the vessel from the rolling sea,
 But cliffs, and shaggy shores, a dreadful sight! 520
 All-rough with rocks, with foamy billows white.
 Fear seiz'd his slacken'd limbs and beating heart ;
 As thus he commun'd with his soul apart.

Ah me ! when o'er a length of waters tost,
 These eyes at last behold th' unhop'd for coast, 525
 No port receives me from the angry main,
 But the loud deeps demand me back again.

v. 524. *Ah me ! when o'er a length of waters tost.*] Ulysses in this place calls as it were a council in his own breast ; considers his danger, and how to free himself from it. But it may be asked if it be probable that he should have leisure for such a consultation, in the time of such imminent danger ? The answer is, that nothing could be more happily imagined, to exalt his character : he is drawn with a great presence of mind in the most desperate circumstances : fear does not prevail over his reason : his wisdom dictates the means of his preservation ; and his bravery of spirit supports him in the accomplishment of it.

The poet is also very judicious in the management of the speech : it is concise, and therefore proper to the occasion, there being no leisure for prolixity ; every image is drawn from the situation of the place, and his present condition ; he follows nature, and nature is the foundation of true poetry.

Book V. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 261

Above sharp rocks forbidding access ; around
Roar the wild waves ; beneath is sea profound !
No footing sure affords the faithless sand, 530
To stem too rapid, and too deep to stand.
If here I enter, my efforts are vain,
Dash'd on the cliffs, or heav'd into the main ;
Or round the island if my course I bend,
Where the ports open, or the shores descend, 535
Back to the seas the rolling surge may sweep,
And bury all my hopes beneath the deep.
Or some enormous whale the God may send,
(For many such on Amphitrite attend)
Too well the turns of mortal chance I know, 540
And hate relentless of my heav'nly foe.

While thus he thought, a monstrous wave up-
bore

The chief, and dash'd him on the craggy shore:
Torn was his skin, nor had the ribs been whole,
But instant Pallas enter'd in his soul. 545
Close to the cliff with both his hands he clung,
And stuck adherent, and suspended hung ;
'Till the huge surge roll'd off: then, backward
sweep

The reflux tides, and plunge him in the deep.
As when the Polypus from forth his cave 550
Torn with full force, reluctant beats the wave ;

v. 550. *As when the Polypus.*] It is very surprising to
see the prodigious variety with which Homer enlivens his
poetry: he rises or falls as his subject leads him, and finds

His ragged claws are stuck with stones and sands:
 So the rough rock had shagg'd Ulysses' hands.
 And now had perish'd, whelm'd beneath the main,
 Th' unhappy man; ev'n fate had been in vain:
 But all-subduing Pallas lent her pow'r, 556
 And prudence fav'd him in the needful hour.

allusions proper to represent an hero in battle, or a person in calamity. We have here an instance of it; he compares Ulysses to a Polypus; the similitude is suited to the element, and to the condition of the person. It is observable, that this is the only full description of a person shipwrecked in all his poems: he therefore gives a loose to his imagination, and enlarges upon it very copiously. There appears a surprising fertility of invention through the whole of it: in what a variety of attitudes is Ulysses drawn during the storm, and at his escape from it? His soliloquies in the turns of his condition, while he is sometimes almost out of danger, and then again involved in new difficulties, engage our hopes and fears. He ennobles the whole by his machinery, and Neptune, Pallas, and Leucothea interest themselves in his safety or destruction. He has likewise chosen the most proper occasion for a copious description; there is leisure for it. The proposition of the poem requires him to describe a man of sufferings in the person of Ulysses; he therefore no sooner introduces him, but he throws him into the utmost calamities, and describes them largely, to shew at once the greatness of his distress, and his wisdom and patience under it. In what are the sufferings of Æneas in Virgil comparable to these of Ulysses? Æneas suffers little personally in comparison of Ulysses; his incidents have less variety, and consequently less beauty. Homer draws his images from nature, but embellishes those images with the utmost art, and fruitfulness of invention.

Book V. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 263

Beyond the beating surge his course he bore,
 (A wider circle, but in sight of shore)
 With longing eyes, observing, to survey 560
 Some smooth ascent, or safe-sequester'd bay.
 Between the parting rocks at length he spy'd
 A falling stream with gentler waters glide ;
 Where to the seas the shelving shore declin'd,
 And form'd a bay impervious to the wind. 565
 To this calm port the glad Ulysses prest,
 And hail'd the river, and its God address.

Whoe'er thou art, before whose stream unknown
 I bend, a suppliant at thy wat'ry throne,
 Hear, azure king ! nor let me fly in vain 570
 To thee from Neptune and the raging main.
 Heav'n hears and pities hapless men like me,
 For sacred ev'n to Gods is misery :
 Let then thy waters give the weary rest,
 And save a suppliant, and a man distressed. 575

He pray'd, and straight the gentle stream subsides,
 Detains the rushing current of his tides,

v. 573. *For sacred ev'n to Gods is misery.*] This expression is bold, yet reconcileable to truth : heaven in reality has regard to the misery and affliction of good men, and at last delivers them from it. *Res est sacra miser*, as Dacier observes ; and Seneca, in his Dissertation on Providence, speaks to this purpose, *Ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat, intentus operi suo, Deus ! Ecce par Deo dignum, vir fortis cum malâ fortuna compositus !* Misery is not always a punishment, but sometimes a trial : this is agreeable to true theology.

Before the wand'rer smooths the wat'ry way,
 And soft receives him from the rolling sea.
 That moment, fainting as he touch'd the shore, 580
 He dropt his finewy arms : his knees no more
 Perform'd their office, or his weight upheld :
 His swol'n heart heav'd ; his bloated body swell'd :

v. 578. *Before the wand'rer smooths the wat'ry way.*] Such passages as these are bold yet beautiful. Poetry animates every thing, and turns rivers into Gods. But what occasion is there for the intervention of this River-God to smooth the waters, when Pallas had already composed both the seas and the storms? The words in the original solve the objection, *πρόσθε δὲ οἱ ποίησε γαλήνην*; or *smoothed the way before him*, that is, his own current: the actions therefore are different; Pallas gives a general calmness to the sea, the River-god to his own current.

v. 581. *He dropp'd his finewy arms : his knees no more Perform'd their office.*]

Eustathius appears to me to give this passage a very forced interpretation: he imagines that the poet, by saying that Ulysses bent his knees and arms, spoke philosophically, and intended to express that he contracted his limbs, that had been fatigued with the long extension in swimming, by a voluntary remission; lest they should grow stiff, and lose their natural faculty. But this is an impossibility: how could this be done, when he is speechless, fainting, without pulse and respiration? Undoubtedly Homer, as Dacier observes, means by the expression of *ἔκαμψε γόνατα* & *χεῖρας*, no more than that his limbs failed him, or he fainted. If the action was voluntary, it implies that he intended to refresh them, for *γόνυ κάμπτειν* is generally used in that sense by Homer: if involuntary, it signifies he fainted.

Book V. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 265

From mouth and nose the briny torrent ran ;
And lost in lassitude lay all the man, 585
Depriv'd of voice, of motion, and of breath ;
The soul scarce waking, in the arms of death.
Soon as warm life its wonted office found,
The mindful chief Leucothea's scarf unbound ;
Observant of her word, he turn'd aside 590
His head, and cast it on the rolling tide.
Behind him far, upon the purple waves
The waters waft it, and the nymph receives.

Now parting from the stream, Ulysses found
A mossy bank, with pliant rushes crown'd ! 595 }
The bank he press'd, and gently kiss'd the ground ; }
Where on the flow'ry herb as soft he lay,
Thus to his soul the sage began to say.

What will ye next ordain, ye Pow'rs on high ?
And yet, ah yet, what fates are we to try ? 600
Here by the stream, if I the night out-wear,
Thus spent already, how shall nature bear }
The dews descending, and nocturnal air ; }
Or chilly vapours, breathing from the flood
When morning rises ?——If I take the wood, 605
And in thick shelter of innum'rous boughs
Enjoy the comfort gentle sleep allows ;
'Tho' fenc'd from cold, and tho' my toil be past,
What savage beasts may wander in the waste ?
Perhaps I yet may fall a bloody prey 610
To prowling bears, or lions in the way.

Thus long debating in himself he stood:
 At length he took the passage to the wood,
 Whose shady horrors on a rising brow, 614
 Wav'd high, and frown'd upon the stream below.
 There grew two olives, closest of the grove,
 With roots intwin'd, and branches interwove;
 Alike their leaves, but not alike they smil'd
 With sister-fruits; one fertile, one was wild.
 Nor here the sun's meridian rays had pow'r, 620
 Nor wind sharp piercing, nor the rushing show'r;
 The verdant arch so close its texture kept:
 Beneath this covert great Ulysses crept.
 Of gather'd leaves an ample bed he made, 624
 (Thick strown by tempest thro' the bow'ry shade)
 Where three at least might winter's cold defy,
 Tho' Boreas rag'd along th' inclement sky.
 This store, with joy the patient hero found,
 And sunk amidst 'em, heap'd the leaves around.
 As some poor peasant, fated to reside 630
 Remote from neighbours in a forest wide,

v. 630. *As some poor peasant, fated to reside
 Remote from neighbours.]*

Homer is very happy in giving dignity to low images.
 What can be more unpromising than this comparison,
 and what more successfully executed? Ulysses, in whom
 remains as it were but a spark of life, the vital heat being
 extinguished by the shipwreck, is very justly compared to
 a brand, that retains only some small remains of fire; the
 leaves that cover Ulysses, are represented by the embers,
 and the preservation of the fire all night, paints the revi-

Studious to save what human wants require,
 In embers heap'd, preserves the seeds of fire:
 Hid in dry foliage thus Ulysses lies,
 'Till Pallas pour'd soft slumbers on his eyes; 635
 And golden dreams, (the gift of sweet repose)
 Lull'd all his cares, and banish'd all his woes.

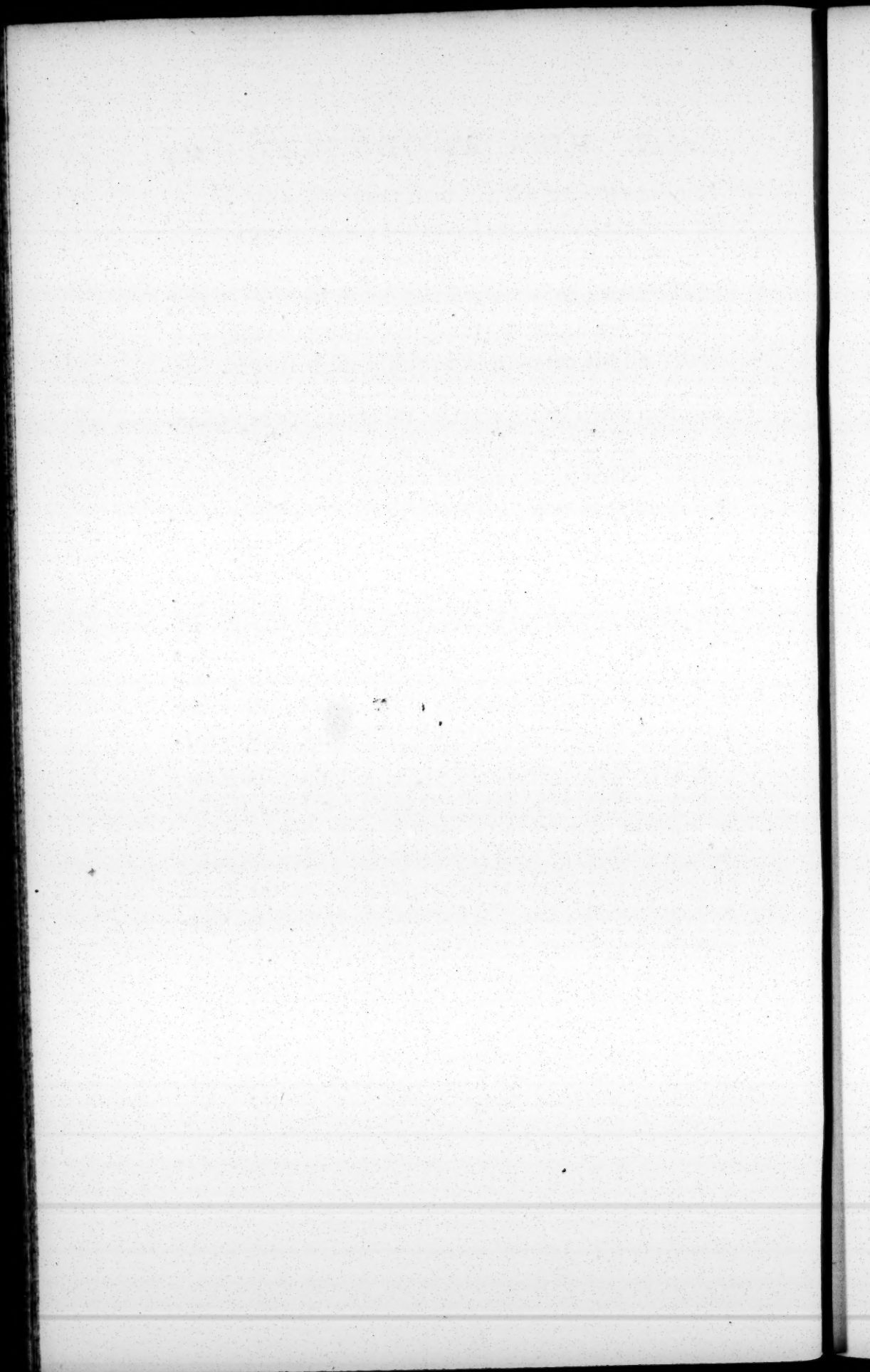
val of his spirits by the repose of the night ; the expression,

— — — fated to reside

Remote from neighbours,

is not added in vain ; it gives, as Eustathius further observes, an air of credibility to the allusion, as if it had really been drawn from some particular observation ; a person that lives in a desert being obliged to such circumstantial cares, where it is impossible to have a supply, for want of neighbours. Homer literally calls these remains *the seeds of fire* ; Æschylus in his Prometheus calls a spark of fire *πυρὸς ἀνὰ νῦν*, or *a fountain of fire* ; less happily in my judgment, the ideas of fire and water being contradictory.

The Conclusion.] This book begins with the seventh day, and comprehends the space of twenty-five days ; the first of which is taken up in the message of Mercury, and interview between Calypso and Ulysses ; the four following in the building of the vessel ; eighteen before the storm, and two after it. So that one and thirty days are completed, since the opening of the poem.



THE
SIXTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE
A R G U M E N T.

PALLAS appearing in a dream to *Nauficæa*, (the daughter of *Alcinous* king of *Phæacia*) commands her to descend to the river, and wash the robes of state, in preparation to her nuptials. *Nauficæa* goes with her handmaids to the river; where, while the garments are spread on the bank, they divert themselves in sports. Their voices awake *Ulysses*, who addressing himself to the princess, is by her relieved and clothed, and receives directions in what manner to apply to the king and queen of the island.

THE
SIXTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

WHILE thus the weary wand'rer sunk to rest,
And peaceful slumbers calm'd his anxious
breast ;

The martial Maid from heav'n's aerial height
Swift to Phæacia wing'd her rapid flight.

In elder times the soft Phæacian train 5

In ease possess'd the wide Hyperian plain ;

'Till the Cyclopean race in arms arose,

A lawless nation of gigantick foes :

Then great Naufithous from Hyperia far,

Thro' seas retreating from the sound of war, 10

The recreant nation to fair Scheria led,

Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head :

v. 12. *Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head.*] The Phæacians having a great share in the succeeding parts of the *Odyssey*, it may not be improper to enlarge upon their character. Homer has here described them very distinctly : he is to make use of the Phæacians to convey Ulysses to his country, he therefore by this short character, gives the reader such an image of them, that he is not surpris'd at their credulity and simplicity, in believing all

There, round his tribes a strength of wall he rais'd ;
To heav'n the glitt'ring domes and temples blaz'd :

those fabulous recitals which Ulysses makes in the progress of the poem. The place likewise in which he describes them is well chosen ; it is before they enter upon action, and by this method we know what to expect from them, and see how every action is naturally suited to their character.

Bossu observes that the poet has inserted this verse with great judgment : Ulysses, says he, knew that the Phæacians were simple and credulous ; and that they had all the qualities of a lazy people, who admire nothing so much as romantick adventures : he therefore pleases them by recitals suited to their own humour : but even here the poet is not unmindful of his more understanding readers ; and the truth intended to be taught by way of moral is, that a soft and effeminate life breaks the spirit, and renders it incapable of manly sentiments or actions.

Plutarch seems to understand this verse in a different manner ; he quotes it in his *Dissertation upon Banishment*, (to shew that Nautilous made his people happy though he left his own country, and settled them far from the commerce of mankind, *ἐκὰς ἀνδρῶν ἀλφειάων*,) without any particular view to the Phæacians ; which was undoubtedly intended by Homer, those words being a kind of a preface to their general character.

This Phæacia of the ancients is the island now called Corfu. The inhabitants of it were a colony of the Hyperians : Eustathius remarks, that it has been a question whether Hyperia were a city or an island ; he judges it to be a city : it was infested by the Cyclops ; but they had no shipping, as appears from the ninth of the *Odyssey*, and consequently if it had been an island, they could not have molested the Phæacians ; he therefore concludes it to be a city, afterwards called Camarina in Sicily.

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 273

Just to his realms, he parted grounds from grounds, 15
And shar'd the lands, and gave the lands their
bounds.

Now in the silent grave the monarch lay,
And wise Alcinous held the regal sway.

To his high palace thro' the fields of air
The Goddesses shot; Ulysses was her care. 20
There as the night in silence roll'd away,
A heav'n of charms divine Nauficæ lay:
Thro' the thick gloom the shining portals blaze;
Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a
Grace.

Light as the viewless air, the warrior-Maid 25
Glides thro' the valves, and hovers round her head;
A fav'rite virgin's blooming form she took,
From Dymas sprung, and thus the vision spoke:
Oh indolent! to waste thy hours away!
And sleep'st thou careless of the bridal day? 30

Mr. Barnes has here added a verse that is not to be found in any other edition; and I have rendered it in the translation.

v. 24. *Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a Grace.*]
The poet, as Eustathius observes, celebrates the beauty of these two attending virgins to raise their characters, that they may not be esteemed common servants, or the poet thought extravagant, when he compares Nauficæ and her damsels to Diana and her nymphs.

The judgment with which he introduces the vision is remarkable: in the Iliad, when he is to give an air of

Thy spousal ornament neglected lies ;
 Arise, prepare the bridal train, arise !

importance to his vision, he clothes it in the likeness of Nestor, the wisest person of the army ; a man of less consideration had been unsuitable to the greatness of the occasion, which was to persuade kings and heroes. Here the poet sends a vision to a young lady, under the resemblance of a young lady : he adapts the circumstances to the person, and describes the whole with an agreeable propriety. *Eustathius.*

V. 31. *The spousal ornament neglected lies ;
 Arise, prepare the bridal train —]*

Here is a remarkable custom of antiquity. Eustathius observes, that it was usual for the bride to give changes of dress to the friends of the bridegroom at the celebration of the marriage, and Homer directly affirms it. Dacier quotes a passage in Judges concerning Sampson's giving changes of garments at his marriage feast, as an instance of the like custom amongst the Israelites ; but I believe, if there was such a custom at all amongst them, it is not evident from the passage alledged : nothing is plainer, than that Sampson had not given the garments, if his riddle had not been expounded : nay, instead of giving, he himself had received them, if it had not been interpreted. I am rather of opinion that what is said of Sampson, has relation to another custom amongst the ancients, of proposing an ænigma at festivals, and adjudging a reward to him that solved it. These the Greeks called *γρίφος Συμπόσιος* ; *griphos convivales* ; Athenæus has a long dissertation about this practice in his tenth book, and gives a number of instances of the ænigmatical propositions in use at Athens, and of the forfeitures and rewards upon the solution, and non-solution of them ; and Eusta-

A just applause the cares of dress impart,
 And give soft transport to a parent's heart.
 Haste, to the limpid stream direct thy way, 35
 When the gay morn unveils her smiling ray :

thus in the tenth book of the *Odyssey*, comes into the same opinion. So that if it was a custom amongst the Israelites as well as Greeks, to give garments, (as it appears to be to give other gifts) this passage is no instance of it: it is indeed a proof that the Hebrews as well as Greeks had a custom of entertaining themselves at their festivals, with these *griphi convivales*: I therefore believe that these changes of garments were no more than rewards or forfeits, according to the success of the interpretation.

v. 33. *A just applause the cares of dress impart.*] It is very probable that Quintilian had this verse in his view when he wrote *Cultus magnificus addit hominibus, ut Græco versu testatum est, auctoritatem*. His words are almost a translation of it.

Ἐκ γὰρ τοι τέτων φάτις ἀνθρώπους ἀναβαίνει
 ἔσθλη.

What I would chiefly observe, is, the propriety with which this commendation of dress is introduced; it is put into the mouth of a young lady (for so Pallas appears to be) to whose character it is suitable to delight in ornament. It likewise agrees very well with the description of the Phæacians, whose chief happiness consisted in dancing, dressing, singing, &c. Such a commendation of ornament would have been improper in the mouth of a philosopher, but beautiful when spoken by a young lady to Nausicaa.

v. 35. *Haste, to the limpid stream.*] This passage has not escaped the raillery of the criticks; Homer, say they, brings the Goddess of Wisdom down from heaven, only

For rough the way, and distant rolls the wave,
Where their fair vests Phæacian virgins lave.
In pomp ride forth ; for pomp becomes the great,
And majesty derives a grace from state. 46

Then to the palaces of heav'n she sails,
Incumbent on the wings of wafting gales :

Homer seems industriously to avoid ἄρμα, but constantly uses ἀπήνη, or ἄμαξα ; this car was drawn by mules ; whereas, observes Eustathius, the chariot or ἄρμα was proper only for horses. The word car takes in the idea of any other vehicle, as well as of a chariot.

This passage has undergone a very severe censure, as mean and ridiculous, chiefly from the expressions to her father afterwards, ὑψηλὴν, εὐκυκλον : which being rendered, *high, and round*, disgrace the author : no person, I believe, would ask a father to lend his high and round car ; nor has Homer said it : Eustathius observes, that εὐκυκλον is the same as εὐτροχος, κύκλα λέγονται οἱ τροχοὶ, or wheels ; and that ὑπερτεγία, is τὸ ἐπιτεμένον τετραγώνον περιθλίον τῷ ἄξονι, or the quadrangular body of the car that rests upon the axle of it ; this fully answers the criticism : Nausicaa describes the car so particularly, to distinguish it from a chariot, which had been improper for her purpose : the other part of the objection, concerning the roundness of the car, is a mistake in the critick ; the word having relation to the wheels, and not to the body of it, which, as Eustathius observes, was quadrangular.

v. 47. *Then to the palaces of heav'n she sails.*] Lucretius has copied this fine passage, and equalled, if not surpassed the original.

- " Apparet Divûm numen, sedesque quietæ,
- " Quas neque concutiunt venti, neque nubila nimbis
- " Aspergunt, neque nix acri concreta pruina
- " Cana cadens violat : semperque innubilis æther
- " Integit, & largè diffuso lumine ridet."

278 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book VI.

The feat of Gods ; the regions mild of peace,
 Full joy, and calm eternity of ease. 50
 There no rude winds presume to shake the skies,
 No rains descend, no snowy vapours rise ;
 But on immortal thrones the blest repose :
 The firmament with living splendours glows.
 Hither the Goddess wing'd th' aerial way, 55
 Thro' heav'n's eternal gates that blaz'd with day.

Now from her rosy car Aurora shed
 The dawn, and all the orient flam'd with red.
 Uprose the virgin with the morning light,
 Obedient to the vision of the night. 60
 The queen she sought : the queen her hours be-
 stow'd
 In curious works ; the whirling spindle glow'd
 With crimson threads, while busy damsels cull
 The snowy fleece, or twist the purpled wool.

The picture is the same in both authors, but the colour-
 ing in my opinion is less beautiful in Homer than Lucre-
 tius: the three last lines in particular are fuller of orna-
 ment, and the very verses have an air of the serenity they
 were intended to paint.

v. 61. — — — the queen her hours bestow'd
 In curious work ———]

This is another image of ancient life: we see a queen
 amidst her attendants at work at the dawn of day : *de*
nocte surrexit, & digiti ejus apprehenderant fusum. This is a
 practice as contrary to the manners of our ages, as the
 other of washing the robes : it is the more remarkable in
 this queen, because she lived amongst an idle effeminate
 people, that loved nothing but pleasures, *Dacier.*

Book VI. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 279

Meanwhile Phæacia's peers in council sat ; 65

From his high dome the king descends in state,

Then with a filial awe the royal maid

Approach'd him passing, and submissive said ;

Will my dread fire his ear regardful deign,
And may his child the royal car obtain ? 70

Say, with thy garments shall I bend my way,

Where thro' the vales the mazy waters stray ?

A dignity of drefs adorns the great,

And kings draw lustre from the robe of state.

Five sons thou hast ; three wait the bridal day, 75

And spotless robes become the young and gay :

So when with praise amid the dance they shine,

By these my cares adorn'd, that praise is mine.

Thus she : but blushes ill-restrain'd betray
Her thoughts intentive on the bridal day : 80

The conscious fire the dawning blush survey'd,

And smiling thus bespoke the blooming maid.

My child, my darling joy, the car receive ;

That, and whate'er our daughter asks, we give.

Swift at the royal nod th' attending train 85

The car prepare, the mules incessant rein.

The blooming virgin with dispatchful cares

Tunicks, and stoles, and robes imperial bears.

v. 88. *Tunicks, and stoles, and robes imperial bears.*] It is not without reason that the poet describes Nausicaa carrying the whole wardrobe of the family to the river : he inserts these circumstances so particularly, that she may

The queen, assiduous, to her train assigns
 The sumptuous viands, and the flav'rous wines.
 The train prepare a cruise of curious mould, 91
 A cruise of fragrance, form'd of burnish'd gold ;
 Odour divine ! whose soft refreshing streams
 Sleek the smooth skin, and scent the snowy limbs.

Now mounting the gay seat, the filken reins 95
 Shine in her hand : along the sounding plains
 Swift fly the mules : nor rode the nymph alone ;
 Around, a bevy of bright damsels shone.

be able to clothe Ulysses in the sequel of the story : he further observes the modesty and simplicity of those early times, when the whole dress of a king and his family (who reigned over a people that delighted in dress) is without gold ; for we see Nausicaa carries with her all the habits that were used at the greatest solemnities ; which had they been wrought with gold could not have been washed. *Eustathius.*

v. 95. *Now mounting the gay seat, &c.*] This image of Nausicaa riding in her car to the river, has exercised the pencils of excellent painters. Pausanias in his fifth book, which is the first of the Eliacks, speaks of a picture of two virgins drawn by mules, of which the one guides the reins, the other has her head covered with a veil : it is believed that it represents Nausicaa, the daughter of Alcinous, going with one of her virgins to the river. The words of Pausanias have caused some doubt with relation to the picture ; he says, ἐπὶ ἡμιόνων, or *upon mules*, but Homer describes her upon a car ; how then can Nausicaa be intended by the painter ? But Romulus Amasæus, who comments upon Pausanias, solves the difficulty, by observing that ἐπὶ ἡμιόνων does not signify upon mules, but a car drawn by mules, by a figure frequent in all authors.

They seek the cisterns where Phæacian dames
Wash their fair garments in the limpid streams ;
Where gathering into depth from falling rills, 101
The lucid wave a spacious basin fills.

Pliny is also thus to be understood in his thirty-fifth book ; Protogenes the Rhodian painted at Athens, Paralus, and likewise Hemionida, who is said to represent Nausicaa ; Hemionida is used (as Hermolaus Barbarus observes upon that passage) as a term of art to express a virgin riding upon, or more properly drawn by mules, or ἐπὶ ἡμιόγων. *Spondanus.*

v. 101. *Where gathering into depth from falling rills,
The lucid wave a spacious basin fills.]*

It is evident, that the ancients had basins, or cisterns, continually supplied by the rivers for this business of washing : they were called, observes Eustathius, πλυνοὶ, or βόθροι ; and were sometimes made of marble, other times of wood. Thus in the Iliad, book twenty-two,

Each gushing fount a marble cistern fills,
Whose polish'd bed receives the falling rills,
Where Trojan dames, ere yet alarm'd by Greece,
Wash'd their fair garments in the days of peace.

The manner of washing was different from what is now in use : they trod them with their feet, στείβον, ἐτείβον τοῖς ποσὶ. *Eustathius.*

It may be thought that these customs are of small importance, and of little concern to the present ages : it is true ; but time has stamped a value upon them : like ancient medals, their intrinsic worth may be small, but yet they are valuable, because images of antiquity.

Plutarch in his Symposiacks proposes this question, Why Nausicaa washes in the river, rather than the sea, though it was more nigh, more hot, and consequently more fit

The mules unharnes'd range beside the main,
 Or crop the verdant herbage of the plain.
 Then emulous the royal robes they lave, 105
 And plunge the vestures in the cleansing wave ;
 (The vestures cleans'd o'erspread the shelly sand,
 Their snowy lustre whitens all the strand :)
 Then with a short repast relieve their toil,
 And o'er their limbs diffuse ambrosial oil ; 110
 And while the robes imbibe the solar ray,
 O'er the green mead the sporting virgins play :
 (Their shining veils unbound.) Along the skies
 Toft, and retoft, the ball incessant flies.
 They sport, they feast ; Nausicaa lifts her voice, 115
 And warbling sweet, makes earth and heav'n rejoice.

for the purpose than the river ? Theon answers from Aristotle, that the sea-water has many gross, rough and earthy particles in it, as appears from its saltness, whereas fresh water is more pure and unmixed, and consequently more subtle and penetrating, and fitter for use in washing. Themistocles dislikes this reason, and affirms that sea-water being more rough and earthy than that of rivers, is therefore the most proper, for its cleansing quality ; this appears from observation, for in washing, ashes, or some such substance are thrown into the fresh water to make it effectual, for those particles open the pores, and conduce to the effect of cleansing. The true reason then is, that there is an unctuous nature in sea-water (and Aristotle confesses all salt to be unctuous) which hinders it from cleansing : whereas river-water is pure, less mixed, and consequently more subtle and penetrating, and being free from all oily substance, is preferable and more effectual than sea-water.

As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves,
Or wide Tæygetus resounding groves ;

v. 117. *As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves.*] This is a very beautiful comparison, (and whenever I say any thing in commendation of Homer, I would always be understood to mean the original.) Virgil was sensible of it, and inserted it in his poem.

“ Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi,
“ Exercet Diana choros ; quam mille secutæ
“ Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades : illa pharetram
“ Fert humero, gradienſque deas supereminet omnes :
“ Latonæ tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus.”

It has given occasion for various criticisms, with relation to the beauty of the two authors. I will lay before the reader what is said in behalf of Homer in Aulus Gellius, and the answer by Scaliger.

Gellius writes, that it was the opinion of Valerius Probus, that no passage has been more unhappily copied by Virgil, than this comparison. Homer very beautifully compares Nausicaa, a virgin, sporting with her damsels in a solitary place, to Diana, a virgin Goddess, taking her diversion in a forest, in hunting with her rural nymphs. Whereas Dido, a widow, is drawn by Virgil in the midst of a city, walking gravely with the Tyrian princes, *Instans operi, regniſque futuris* ; a circumstance that bears not the least resemblance to the sports of the Goddess. Homer represents Diana with her quiver at her shoulder, but at the same time he describes her as an huntress : Virgil gives her a quiver, but mentions nothing of her as an huntress, and consequently lays a needless burthen upon her shoulder. Homer excellently paints the fulness of joy which Latona felt at the sight of her daughter, γένηθε δὲ τὴ φρένα Ληϊῶ ; Virgil falls infinitely short of it in the word *pertentant*, which signifies a light joy that sinks not deep

A silvan train the huntress queen surrounds,
Her rattling quiver from her shoulder sounds : 120

into the heart. Lastly, Virgil has omitted the strongest point and very flower of the comparison,

ῥεῖα δ' ἀγρίῳτι πέλονται, καλαὶ δὲ τὲ παῖσαι.

It is the last circumstance that compleats the comparison, as it distinguishes Nausicaa from her attendants, for which very purpose the allusion was introduced.

Scaliger (who never deserts Virgil in any difficulty) answers, that the persons, not the places, are intended to be represented by both poets ; otherwise Homer himself is blameable, for Nausicaa is not sporting on a mountain but a plain, and has neither bow nor quiver like Diana. Neither is there any weight in the objection concerning the gravity of the gait of Dido ; for neither is Nausicaa described in the act of hunting, but dancing : and as for the word *pertentant*, it is a metaphor taken from musicians and musical instruments : it denotes a strong degree of joy, *per* bears an intensive sense, and takes in the perfection of joy. As to the quiver, it was an ensign of the Goddess, as Ἀρτεμιδοῦχος was of Apollo, and is applied to her upon all occasions indifferently, not only by Virgil, but more frequently by Homer. Lastly, ῥεῖα δ' ἀγρίῳτι, &c. is superfluous ; for the joy of Latona compleats the whole, and Homer has already said γέγηθε δὲ τὲ φρένα Λητώ.

But still it must be allowed, that there is a greater correspondence to the subject intended to be illustrated, in Homer than in Virgil. Diana sports, so does Nausicaa ; Diana is a virgin, so is Nausicaa ; Diana is amongst her virgin nymphs, Nausicaa among her virgin attendants ; whereas, in all these points, there is the greatest dissimilitude between Dido and Diana : and no one I believe, but Scaliger, can think the verse above quoted superfluous : which, indeed, is the beauty and perfection of the

Book VI. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 285

Fierce in the sport, along the mountain's brow
 They bay the boar, or chase the bounding roe :
 High o'er the lawn, with more majestick pace,
 Above the nymphs she treads with stately grace ;
 Distinguish'd excellence the Goddess proves ; 125
 Exults Latona, as the virgin moves.

With equal grace Nauficæa trod the plain,
 And shone transcendent o'er the beauteous train.

Meantime (the care and fav'rite of the skies)
 Wrapt in embow'ring shade, Ulysses lies, 130
 His woes forgot ! but Pallas now addrest
 To break the bands of all-composing rest.
 Forth from her snowy hand Nauficæa threw
 The various ball ; the ball erroneous flew, 134

comparison. There may, perhaps, be a more rational objection made against this line in both poets.

“ Latonæ tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus.”

This verse has no relation to the principal subject, the expectation is fully satisfied without it, and it alludes to nothing that either precedes or follows it, and consequently may be judged superfluous.

v. 133. *Forth from her snowy hand Nauficæa threw
 The various ball ———]*

This play with the ball was called *φενίς*, and *ἐφερίδα*, by the ancients ; and from the signification of the word, which is *deception*, we may learn the nature of the play : the ball was thrown to some one of the players unexpectedly, and he as unexpectedly threw it to some other of the company to catch, from which surprise upon one another it took the name of *φενίς*. It was a sport much in use among the ancients, both men and women ; it caused

And swam the stream: loud shrieks the virgin train,
And the loud shriek redoubles from the main.

a variety of motions in throwing and running, and was therefore a very healthful exercise. The Lacedæmonians were remarkable for the use of it; Alexander the Great frequently exercised at it; and Sophocles wrote a play, called *πλυνγίας*, or Lotrices; in which he represented Nauficæa sporting with her damsels at this play: it is not now extant.

Dionysidorus gives us a various reading, instead of *ῥαῖζαν ἔπειτ' ἔρριψε*, he writes it, *πάλλαν ἔπειτ'*, which the Latins render *πίλον*, and Suidas countenances the alteration, for he writes that a damsel named Larissa, as she sported at this play (*πίλον*, not *ῥαίση*) was drowned in the river Peneus. *Eustathius*.

What I would further observe is, the art of the poet in carrying on the story: he proceeds from incident to incident very naturally, and makes the sports of these virgins contribute to the principal design of the poem, and promote the re-establishment of Ulysses, by discovering him advantageously to the Phæacians. He so judiciously interweaves these sports into the texture of the story, that there would be a chasm if they were taken away; and the sports of the virgins are as much of a piece with the whole, as any of the labours of Ulysses.

The poet reaps a further advantage from this conduct: it beautifies and enlivens the poem with a pleasant and entertaining scene, and relieves the reader's mind by taking it off from a continual representation of horror and sufferings in the story of Ulysses: he himself seems here to take breath, and indulging his fancy, lets it run out into several beautiful comparisons, to prepare the reader to hear with a better relish the long detail of the calamities of his hero, through the sequel of the Odyssey.

Book VI. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 287

Wak'd by the thrilling sound, Ulysses rose,
And to the deaf woods wailing, breath'd his woes.

Ah me ! on what inhospitable coast,
On what new region is Ulysses tost : 140
Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms ;
Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms ?
What sounds are these that gather from the shores :
The voice of nymphs that haunt the silvan bow'rs,
The fair-hair'd Dryads of the shady wood ; 145
Or azure daughters of the silver flood ;
Or human voice ? but, issuing from the shades,
Why cease I straight to learn what sound invades ?

v. 139. *Ah me ! on what inhospitable coast.*] This soliloquy is well adapted to the circumstances of Ulysses ; and short, as is requisite in all soliloquies.

Virgil has imitated it, and Scaliger in general prefers the copy to the original.

“ Ut primum lux alma data est, exire, locosque
“ Explorare novos, quas vento accesserit oras :
“ Qui teneant (nam inculta videt) hominesne, feræne,
“ Quærere constituit”——

But it may perhaps be true, that Virgil here falls short of Homer : there is not that harmony of numbers, that variety of circumstances and sentiments in the Latin, as appears in the Greek poet ; and above all, the whole passage has more force and energy by being put into the mouth of Ulysses, than when merely related by Virgil.

Dacier observes, that Abraham makes the very same reflections as Ulysses, upon his arrival at Gerar. *Cogitavi mecum dicens, forsitan non est timor domini in loco est.* Gen. xx. 11. *I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place ;* which very well answers to καὶ σφ.ν νόος ἐστὶ θεοῦ.

Then, where the grove with leaves umbrageous
bends ;

With forceful strength a branch the hero rends ; 150
Around his loins the verdant cincture spreads
A wreathy foliage and concealing shades.

v. 151. *Around his loins the verdant tincture spreads
A wreathy foliage and concealing shades.]*

This passage has given great offence to the criticks. The interview between Ulysses and Nausicaa, says Rapin, outrages all the rules of decency; she forgets her modesty, and betrays her virtue, by giving too long an audience: she yields too much to his complaints, and indulges her curiosity too far at the sight of a person in such circumstances. But perhaps Rapin is too severe; Homer has guarded every circumstance with as much caution as if he had been aware of the objection: he covers his loins with a broad foliage, (for Eustathius observes, that *πρόσθε* signifies *πλατὺς*, or *a broad branch*) he makes Ulysses speak at a proper distance, and introduces Minerva to encourage her virgin-modesty. Is there here any outrage of decency? Besides, what takes off this objection of immodesty in Nausicaa, is, that the sight of a naked man was not unusual in those ages; it was customary for virgins of the highest quality to attend heroes to the bath, and even to assist in bathing them, without any breach of modesty; as is evident from the conduct of Polycaste in the conclusion of the third book of the Odyssey, who bathes and perfumes Telemachus. If this be true, the other objections of Rapin about her yielding too much to his complaints, &c. are of no weight; but so many testimonies of her virtuous and compassionate disposition, which induces her to pity and relieve calamity. Yet it may seem that the other damsels had a different opinion of this interview, and that through modesty they ran away, while Nausicaa alone

As when a lion in the midnight hours,
Beat by rude blasts, and wet with wint'ry show'rs,

talks with Ulysses: but this only shews, not that she had less modesty, but more prudence, than her retinue. The damsels fled not out of modesty, but fear of an enemy: whereas Nausicaa wisely reflects that no such person could arrive there, the country being an island; and from his appearance, she rightly concluded him to be a man in calamity. This wisdom is the Pallas in the allegory, which makes her to stay when the other damsels fly for want of equal reflection. Adam and Eve covered themselves after the same manner as Ulysses.

v. 153. *As when a lion in the midnight hours.*] This is a very noble comparison, yet has not escaped censure: it has been objected that it is improper for the occasion, as bearing images of too much terroure, only to fright a few timorous virgins, and that the poet is unseasonably sublime. This is only true in burlesque poetry, where the most noble images are frequently assembled to disgrace the subject, and to shew a ridiculous disproportion between the allusion and the principal subject; but the same reason will not hold in epick poetry, where the poet raises a low circumstance into dignity by a sublime comparison. The simile is not introduced merely to shew the impression it made upon the virgins, but paints Ulysses himself in very strong colours: Ulysses is fatigued with the tempests and waves; the lion with winds and storms; it is hunger that drives the lion upon his prey; an equal necessity compels Ulysses to go down to the virgins: the lion is described in all his terrours, Ulysses arms himself as going upon an unknown adventure; so that the comparison is very noble and very proper. This verse in particular has something horrible in the very run of it.

Σμερδαλίῳ δ' αὐτῇσι φάνη κεκακωμένῳ ἄλμυρ.

Descends terrifick from the mountain's brow : 155
 With living flames his rolling eye-balls glow ;
 With conscious strength elate, he bends his way
 Majestically fierce, to seize his prey :
 (The steer or stag :) or with keen hunger bold,
 Springs o'er the fence, and dissipates the fold. 160
 No less a terrour, from the neighb'ring groves
 (Rough from the tossing furge) Ulysses moves ;
 Urg'd on by want, and recent from the storms ;
 The brackish ooze his manly grace deforms.
 Wide o'er the shore with many a piercing cry 165
 To rocks, to caves, the frighted virgins fly ;
 All but the nymph : the nymph stood fix'd alone,
 By Pallas arm'd with boldness not her own.
 Meantime in dubious thought the king awaits,
 And self-considering, as he stands, debates ; 170
 Distant his mournful story to declare,
 Or prostrate at her knee address the pray'r.

Dionysius Halicarnassus in his observations upon the placing of words quotes it to this purpose: when Homer, says he, is to introduce a terrible or unusual image, he rejects the more flowing and harmonious vowels, and makes choice of such mutes and consonants as load the syllables, and render the pronunciation difficult.

Pausanias writes in his Atticks, that the famous painter Polygnotus painted this subject in the gallery at Athens. *Ἐγραψε δὲ καὶ πρὸς τῷ ποταμῷ ταῖς ὁμῶ πλυνέσαις ἐφιστάμενον Ὀδυσσεα* ; he painted Ulysses approaching Nausicaa and her damfels, as they were washing at the river. This is the same Polygnotus who painted in the gallery called *ποικίλη*, the battle of Marathon gained by Miltiades over the Medes and Persians.

But fearful to offend, by wisdom sway'd,
At awful distance he accosts the maid.

If from the skies a Goddess, or if earth 175
(Imperial virgin) boast thy glorious birth,

v. 175. *If from the skies a Goddess, or if earth
(Imperial virgin) boast thy glorious birth,
To thee I bend !]*

There never was a more agreeable and insinuating piece of flattery, than this address of Ulysses; and yet nothing mean appears in it, as is usual in almost all flattery. The only part that seems liable to any imputation, is that exaggeration at the beginning, of calling her a Goddess; yet this is proposed with modesty and doubt, and hypothetically. Eustathius assigns two reasons why he resembles her to Diana, rather than to any other Deity; either because he found her and her damsels in a solitary place, such as Diana is supposed to frequent with her rural nymphs; or perhaps Ulysses might have seen some statue or picture of that Goddess, to which Nauficæa bore a likeness. Virgil (who has imitated this passage, is more bold) when without any doubt or hesitation, before he knew Venus, he pronounces the person with whom he talks, *O Dea, certè.*

Ovid has copied this passage in his *Metamorphosis*, book the fourth;

“ — — puer ô dignissime credi
“ Esse Deus! seu tu Deus es; potes esse Cupido:
“ Sive es mortalis; qui te genuere beati,
“ Et frater felix, & quæ dedit ubera nutrix!
“ Sed longe cunctis longeque potentior illa
“ Si qua tibi sponsa est, si quam dignabere tæda!”

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 With conscious strength elate, he bends his way
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“ Et frater felix, & quæ dedit ubera nutrix!
“ Sed longe cunctis longeque potentior illa
“ Si qua tibi sponsa est, si quam dignabere tæda!”

To thee I bend ! if in that bright disguise
Thou visit earth, a daughter of the skies,

Scaliger prefers Virgil's imitation to Homer ;

“ O, quam te memorem, virgo ! namque haud tibi vultus

“ Mortalis, nec vox hominem sonat. O Dea, certè !

“ An Phœbi soror, an Nympharum sanguinis una ?”

See his reasons in the fifth book of his Poeticks. But Scaliger brings a much heavier charge against Homer, as having stolen the verses from Musæus, and disgraced them by his alterations. The verses are as follow :

Κύπρι φίλη μέλα κύπριν, Ἀθηναίη μέλ' Ἀθηνῆν,

Οὐ γὰρ ἐπιχθονίῃσιν ἴσθην καλέω Σε γυναιξίν.

Ἀλλὰ Σε θυγατέρεσσι Διὸς Κρονιῶν ἐῖσκω,

Ὅλβι' ὅς σ' ἐφύτευσε, καὶ ὀλβίη ἡ τέκε μήτηρ,

Γαῖη, ἢ σ' ἐλόχευσε, μαλαγτάτη.

Scaliger imagines this Musæus to be the same mentioned by Virgil in the Elysian fields,

“ Musæum ante omnes,” &c.

But I believe it is now agreed, that all the works of the ancient Musæus are perished, and that the person who wrote these verses lived many centuries after Homer, and consequently borrowed them from him. Scaliger calls them fine and lively in Musæus, but abject, unnervate, and unharmonious in Homer. But his prejudice against Homer is too apt to give a wrong bias to his judgment. Is the similitude of sound in *ισθην ἴσθην* in the second verse of Musæus, harmonious ? and is there not a tautology in the two last lines ? *Happy is the mother that bore thee, and most happy the womb that brought thee forth* ; as if the happy person in the former line were not the same with the most happy in the latter ! Whereas Homer still rises in his images, and ends with a compliment very agreeable to a beautiful woman.

Hail, Dian, hail ! the huntress of the groves
 So shines majestick, and so stately moves, 180
 So breathes an air divine ! But if thy race
 Be mortal, and this earth thy native place,
 Blest is the father from whose loins you sprung,
 Blest is the mother at whose breast you hung,
 Blest are the brethren who thy blood divide, 185
 To such a miracle of charms ally'd :
 Joyful they see applauding princes gaze,
 When stately in the dance you swim th' harmonious
 maze.

But blest o'er all, the youth with heav'nly charms,
 Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms! 190
 Never, I never view'd 'till this blest hour
 Such finish'd grace ! I gaze and I adore !

But blest o'er all, the youth with heav'nly charms,
 Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms !

But this is submitted to the reader's better judgment.

v. 187. *Joyful they see applauding princes gaze.*] In the original there is a false construction, for after *Χρίσι θυμὸς ἰαίνειται*, Ulysses uses *λευσσοῦντων*, whereas it ought to be *λευσέσι*; but this disorder is not without its effect; it represents the modest confusion with which he addresses Nausicaa; he is struck with a religious awe at the sight of her, (for so *ἄεθας* properly signifies) and consequently naturally falls into a confusion of expression; this is not a negligence, but a beauty. *Eustathius*.

Thus seems the palm with stately honours crown'd
 By Phœbus' altars; thus o'erlooks the ground;
 The pride of Delos. (By the Delian coast, 195
 I voyag'd, leader of a warrior-host,

v. 193. *Thus seems the palm.*] This allusion is introduced to image the stateliness, and exactness of shape in Nausicaa, to the mind of the reader; and so Tully, as Spondanus observes, understands it. Cicero 1. de legibus. *Aut quod Homericus Ulysses Deli se proceram & teneram palmam vidisse dixit, hodie monstrant eandem.* Pliny also mentions this palm, lib. xiv. cap. 44. *Necnon palma Deli ab ejusdem Dei ætate conspicitur.* The story of the palm is this: "When Latona was in travail of Apollo in Delos, the earth that instant produced a large palm, against which she rested in her labour." Homer mentions it in his hymns.

Κεκλιμένη

Ἄλχιδάτω φοίνικι.

And also Callimachus,

Λύσατο δὲ ζωνὴν, ἀπὸ δ' ἐκλίθη ἔμπαλιν ὤμοισι;

Φοίνικι ποτὶ πρέμενον. And again,

— — — ἐπένευσεν ὁ Δῆλιος αὐτὸ τὸ φοίνιξ

Ἐξαπίνης.

This allusion is after the Oriental manner. Thus in the Psalms, how frequently are persons compared to cedars? And in the same author, children are resembled to olive-branches.

This palm was much celebrated by the ancients; the superstition of the age had given it a religious veneration, and even in the times of Tully the natives esteemed it immortal: (for so the abovementioned words imply.) This gives weight and beauty to the address of Ulysses; and it

But ah how chang'd ! from thence my sorrow flows ;
 O fatal voyage, source of all my woes !)
 Raptur'd I stood, and as this hour amaz'd,
 With rev'rence at the lofty wonder gaz'd : 200

could not but be very acceptable to a young lady, to hear herself compared to the greatest wonder in the creation.

Dionysius Halicarnassus observes the particular beauty of these two verses.

Δήλω δὴ ποιε τοῖον Ἀπόλλωνος παρὰ βωμῶ,
 Φοῖνικος νέον ἔχον ἀνερχόμενον ἐνόησα.

When Homer, says he, would paint an elegance of beauty, or represent any agreeable object, he makes use of the smoothest vowels and most flowing semivowels, as in the lines last recited : he rejects harsh sounds, and a collision of rough words ; but the lines flow along with a smooth harmony of letters and syllables, without any offence to the ear by asperity of sound.

v. 198. *O fatal voyage, source of all my woes !*] There is some obscurity in this passage : Ulysses speaks in general, and does not specify what voyage he means. It may therefore be asked how is it to be understood ? Eustathius answers, that the voyage of the Greeks to the Trojan expedition is intended by the poet : for Lycophron writes, that the Greeks sailed by Delos in their passage to Troy.

Homer passes over the voyage in this transient manner without a further explanation : Ulysses had no leisure to enlarge upon that story, but reserves it more advantageously for a future discovery before Alcinous and the Phæacian rulers. By this conduct he avoids a repetition, which must have been tedious to the reader, who would have found little appetite afterwards, if he had already been satisfied by a full discovery made to Nausicaa. The obscurity therefore arises from choice, not want of judgment.

Raptur'd I stand! for earth ne'er knew to bear
 A plant so stately, or a nymph so fair.
 Aw'd from access, I lift my suppliant hands;
 For misery, oh queen, before thee stands!
 Twice ten tempestuous nights I roll'd, resign'd 205
 To roaring billows, and the warring wind;
 Heav'n bade the deep to spare! but heav'n, my foe,
 Spares only to inflict some mightier woe!
 Inur'd to cares, to death in all its forms;
 Outcast I rove, familiar with the storms! 210
 Once more I view the face of human kind:
 Oh let soft pity touch thy gen'rous mind!
 Unconscious of what air I breathe, I stand
 Naked, defenceless on a foreign land.
 Propitious to my wants, a vest supply 215
 To guard the wretched from th' inclement sky:
 So may the Gods who heav'n and earth controul,
 Crown the chaste wishes of thy virtuous soul,
 On thy soft hours their choicest blessings shed;
 Blest with a husband be thy bridal bed; 220
 Blest be thy husband with a blooming race,
 And lasting union crown your blissful days.
 The Gods, when they supremely bless, bestow
 Firm union on their favourites below:
 Then envy grieves, with inly-pining hate; 225
 The good exult, and heav'n is in our state.
 To whom the nymph: O stranger cease thy care;
 Wife is thy soul, but man is born to bear:

Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious scales,
And the good suffers, while the bad prevails: 230
Bear, with a foul resign'd, the will of Jove;
Who breathes, must mourn: thy woes are from above.

v. 229. *Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious scales,
And the good suffers, while the bad prevails.]*

The morality of this passage is excellent, and very well adapted to the present occasion. Ulysses had said,

Heav'n bade the deep to spare! but heav'n, my foe,
Spares only to inflict some mightier woe.

Nausicaa makes use of this expression to pay her address to Ulysses, and at the same time teaches conformable to truth, that the afflicted are not always the objects of divine hate; the Gods (adds she) bestow good and evil indifferently, and therefore we must not judge of men from their conditions, for good men are frequently wretched, and bad men happy. Nay sometimes affliction distinguishes a man of goodness, when he bears it with a greatness of spirit. Sophocles puts a very beautiful expression into the mouth of OEdipus, καλλὸς καλῶν, the *beauty and ornament of calamities*. Eustathius.

Longinus is of opinion, that when great poets and writers sink in their vigour, and cannot reach the pathetick, they descend to the moral. Hence he judges the *Odyssey* to be the work of Homer's declining years, and gives that as a reason of its morality: he speaks not this out of derogation to Homer, for he compares him to the sun, which though it has not the same warmth as when in the meridian, is always of the same bigness: this is no dishonour to the *Odyssey*; the most useful, if not the most beautiful circumstance is allowed it, I mean instruction: in the *Odyssey* Homer appears to be the better man, in the *Iliad* the better poet.

But since thou tread'st our hospitable shore,
 'Tis mine to bid the wretched grieve no more,
 To cloath the naked, and thy way to guide — 235
 Know, the Phæacian tribes this land divide;
 From great Alcinous' royal loins I spring,
 A happy nation, and an happy king.

Then to her maids—Why, why, ye coward train,
 These fears, this flight? ye fear, and fly in vain. 240
 Dread ye a foe? dismiss that idle dread,
 'Tis death with hostile steps these shores to tread:
 Safe in the love of heav'n, an ocean flows
 Around our realm, a barrier from the foes;

v. 242. *'Tis death with hostile steps these shores to tread.*] This I take to be the meaning of the word διεγδς, which Eustathius explains by ζῶν καὶ ἐρρωμένῳ, *vivus & valens*; or, *he shall not be long-lived*. But it may be asked how this character of valour in destroying their enemies can agree with the Phæacians, an effeminate, unwarlike nation? Eustathius answers, that the protection of the Gods is the best defence, and upon this Nausicaa relies. But then it is necessary that man should co-operate with the Gods; for it is in vain to rely upon the Gods for safety, if we ourselves make not use of means proper for it: whereas the Phæacians were a people wholly given up to luxury and pleasures. The true reason then of Nausicaa's praise of the Phæacians may perhaps be drawn from that honourable partiality, and innate love which every person feels for his country. She knew no people greater than the Phæacians, and having ever lived in full security from enemies, she concludes that it is not in the power of enemies to disturb that security.

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'Tis ours this son of sorrow to relieve, 245

Chear the sad heart, nor let affliction grieve.

By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent,

And what to those we give, to Jove is lent.

Then food supply, and bathe his fainting limbs

Where waving shades obscure the mazy streams.

Obedient to the call, the chief they guide 251

To the calm current of the secret tide ;

Close by the stream a royal dress they lay,

A vest and robe, with rich embroid'ry gay :

Then unguents in a vase of gold supply,

That breath'd a fragrance thro' the balmy sky.

To them the king. No longer I detain

Your friendly care : retire, ye virgin train !

Retire, while from my weary'd limbs I lave

The foul pollution of the briny wave : 260

Ye Gods ! since this worn frame refection knew,

What scenes have I survey'd of dreadful view ?

v. 247. *By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent,
And what to those we give, to Jove is lent.]*

This is a very remarkable passage, full of such a pious generosity as the wisest teach, and the best practise. I am sensible it may be understood two ways; and in both it bears an excellent instruction. The words are, *the poor and stranger are from Jove, and a small gift is acceptable to them*, or *acceptable to Jupiter*, Διὶ φίλῃ. I have chosen the latter, in conformity to the eastern way of thinking: *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord*, as it is expressed in the Proverbs.

But, nymphs, recede! sage chastity denies
To raise the blush, or pain the modest eyes.

The nymphs withdrawn, at once into the tide
Active he bounds; the flashing waves divide: 266

v. 263. *But, nymphs, recede! &c.*] This place seems contradictory to the practice of antiquity, and other passages in the Odyssey: nothing is more frequent than for heroes to make use of the ministry of damsels in bathing, as appears from Polycaeste and Telemachus, &c. Whence is it then that Ulysses commands the attendants of Nausicaa to withdraw while he bathes? Spondanus is of opinion, that the poet intended to condemn an indecent custom of those ages solemnly by the mouth of so wise a person as Ulysses: but there is no other instance in all his works to confirm that conjecture. I am at a loss to give a better reason, unless the difference of the places might make an alteration in the action. It is possible that in baths prepared for publick use, there might be some convenience to defend the person who bathed in some degree from observation, which might be wanting in an open river, so that the action might be more indecent in the one instance than in the other, and consequently occasion these words of Ulysses: but this is a conjecture, and submitted as such to the reader's better judgment.

v. 265. — — — — *at once into the tide*
Active he bounds—————]

It may be asked why Ulysses prefers the river waters in washing, to the waters of the sea, in the Odyssey; whereas in the tenth book of the Iliad, after the death of Dolon, Diomed and Ulysses prefer the sea waters to those of the river? There is a different reason for this different regimen: in the Iliad, Ulysses was fatigued, and sweated with the labours of the night, and in such a case the waters being more rough are more purifying and corroborating: but

O'er all his limbs his hands the wave diffuse,
 And from his locks compress the weedy ooze ;
 The balmy oil, a fragrant show'r, he sheds;
 Then, drest, in pomp magnificently treads. 270
 The warrior Goddess gives his frame to shine
 With majesty enlarg'd, and air divine :

here Ulysses comes from the seas, and (as Plutarch in his *Symposiacks* observes upon this passage) the more subtle and light particles exhale by the heat of the sun, but the rough and saline stick to the body, till washed away by fresh waters.

v. 271. *The warrior Goddess gives his frame to shine.*] Poetry delights in the marvellous, and ennobles the most ordinary subjects by dressing them with poetical ornaments, and giving them an adventitious dignity. The foundation of this fiction, of Ulysses receiving beauty from Pallas, is only this: the shipwreck and sufferings of Ulysses had changed his face and features, and his long fasting given him a pale and sorrowful aspect: but being bathed, perfumed, and dressed in robes, he appears another man, full of life and beauty. This sudden change gave Homer the hint to improve it into a miracle; and he ascribes it to Minerva, to give a dignity to his poetry. He further embellishes the description by a very happy comparison. Virgil has imitated it.

“ Os humerosque Deo similis ; namque ipsa decoram
 “ Cæsariem nato genetrix, lumenque juventæ
 “ Purpureum, & lætos oculis afflârat honores.
 “ Quale manus addunt ebori decus, aut ubi flavo
 “ Argentum Pariusve lapis circumdatur auro.”

Scaliger, in the fifth book of his *Poeticks*, prefers Virgil before Homer; and perhaps his opinion is just: *Manus* he says is more elegant than *vir*; and *addunt ebori decus*,

Back from his brows a length of hair unfurls,
 His hyacinthine locks descend in wavy curls.
 As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives 275
 His skill divine, a breathing statue lives ;
 By Pallas taught, he frames the wond'rous mould,
 And o'er the silver pours the fusil gold.
 So Pallas his heroick frame improves 279
 With heav'nly bloom, and like a God he moves.
 A fragrance breathes around : majestick grace
 Attends his steps : th' astonish'd virgins gaze.
 Soft he reclines along the murm'ring seas,
 Inhaling freshness from the fanning breeze.

than χαρίεντα δὲ ἔργα τελέει. *Os humerosque Deo similis*, carries a nobler idea than Homer's μέζονα ἢ πάσσονα ; and above all,

“ — — — Lumenque juventæ

“ Purpureum, & lætos oculis afflârat honores,”

is inexpressibly beautiful.

It is said that this image is made by the assistance of Vulcan and Minerva : why by two deities ? Eustathius answers, the first rudiments and formation of it in the fire is proper to Vulcan, and Minerva is the president of arts ; Minerva gives the artificer wisdom in designing, and Vulcan skill in labouring and finishing the work.

v. 283. *He reclines along the murm'ring seas.*] This little circumstance, Eustathius observes, is not without its effect ; the poet withdraws Ulysses, to give Nausicaa an opportunity to speak freely in his praise without a breach of modesty : she speaks apart to her damsels, and by this conduct Ulysses neither hears his own commendation, which is a pain to all worthy spirits ; nor does Nausicaa betray an indecent sensibility, because she speaks only to her own sex and attendants.

Book VI. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 303

The wond'ring nymph his glorious port survey'd, 285

And to her damsels, with amazement, said,

Not without care divine the stranger treads
This land of joy : his steps some Godhead leads :
Would Jove destroy him, sure he had been driv'n
Far from this realm, the fav'rite isle of heav'n. 290
Late a sad spectacle of woe, he trod
The desert sands, and now he looks a God.
Oh heav'n ! in my connubial hour decree
This man my spouse, or such a spouse as he !

v. 293. *Oh heav'n ! in my connubial hour decree*

This man my spouse, or such a spouse as he !]

This passage has been censured as an outrage against modesty and credibility ; is it probable that a young princess should fall in love with a stranger at first sight ? and if she really falls in love, is it not an indecent passion ? I will lay before the reader the observations of Plutarch upon it. “ If Nausicaa, upon casting her eyes upon this stranger, “ and feeling such a passion for him as Calypso felt, talks “ thus out of wantonness, her conduct is blameable : but “ if perceiving his wisdom by his prudent address, she “ wishes for such an husband, rather than a person of her “ own country, who had no better qualifications than “ singing, dancing and dressing, she is to be commended.” This discovers no weakness, but prudence, and a true judgment. She deserves to be imitated by the fair sex, who ought to prefer a good understanding before a fine coat, and a man of worth before a good dancer.

Besides, it may be offered in vindication of Nausicaa, that she had in the morning been assured by a vision from heaven, that her nuptials were at hand ; this might in-

But haste, the viands and the bowl provide— 295
 The maids the viands, and the bowl supply'd:
 Eager he fed, for keen his hunger rag'd,
 And with the gen'rous vintage thirst affwag'd.

Now on return her care Nauficæa bends,
 The robes resumes, the glittering car ascends, 300
 Far blooming o'er the field: and as she press'd
 The splendid feat, the list'ning chief address'd.

Stranger arise! the sun rolls down the day,
 Lo, to the palace I direct the way:
 Where in high state the nobles of the land 305
 Attend my royal fire, a radiant band.
 But hear, tho' wisdom in thy soul presides,
 Speaks from thy tongue, and ev'ry action guides;
 Advance at distance, while I pass the plain 309
 Where o'er the furrows waves the golden grain:
 Alone I re-ascend—With airy mounds
 A strength of wall the guarded city bounds:
 The jutting land two ample bays divides;
 Full thro' the narrow mouths descend the tides:

duce her to believe that Ulysses was the person intended by the vision for her husband; and his good sense and prudent behaviour, as Dacier observes, might make her wish it, without any imputation of immodesty.

v. 313. *The jutting land two ample bays divides;
 Full thro' the narrow mouths descend the tides.]*

This passage is not without its difficulty: but the scholiast upon Dionysius Periegetes gives us a full explication of it. Δυὸ λιμένας ἔχει ἡ φαίαις, τὸν μὲν Ἀλκινόου, τὸν δὲ Ὑλλῆ, διὸ φησὶ Καλλίμαχος ἀμφίδυμος φαίαξ. The island of Phæacia has

Book VI. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 305

The spacious basons arching rocks enclose, 315
 A sure defence from ev'ry storm that blows.
 Close to the bay great Neptune's fane adjoins ;
 And near, a forum flank'd with marble shines,
 Where the bold youth, the num'rous fleets to store,
 Shape the broad sail, or smooth the taper oar : 320
 For not the bow they bend, nor boast the skill
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill ;
 But the tall mast above the vessel rear,
 Or teach the flutt'ring sail to float in air.
 They rush into the deep with eager joy, 325
 Climb the steep surge, and thro' the tempest fly ;

two ports, the one called the port of *Alcinous*, the other of *Hyllus* ; thus Callimachus calls it the place of two ports And Apollonius for the same reason calls it ἀμφιλαφής, or the place which is entered by two ports. *Dacier*.

v. 325. *They rush into the deep with eager joy.*] It is very judicious in the poet to let us thus fully into the character of the Phæacians, before he comes to shew what relation they have to the story of the Odyssey : he describes Alcinous and the people of better rank, as persons of great hospitality and humanity : this gives an air of probability to the free and benevolent reception which Ulysses found : he describes the vulgar as excellent navigators : and he does this not only because they are islanders, but, as Eustathius observes, to prepare the way for the return of Ulysses, who was to be restored by their conduct to his country, even against the inclination of Neptune, the God of the ocean. But it may be asked, is not Homer inconsistent with himself, when he paints the Phæacians as men of the utmost humanity, and immediately

A proud, unpolish'd race—To me belongs
 The care to shun the blast of slanderous tongues;
 Lest malice, prone the virtuous to defame,
 Thus with vile censure taint my spotless name. 330

“ What stranger this whom thus Nauficæa leads?
 “ Heav’ns, with what graceful majesty he treads?
 “ Perhaps a native of some distant shore,
 “ The future consort of her bridal hour;

calls them a proud unpolish'd race, and given up to censoriousness? It is easy to reconcile the seeming contradiction, by applying the character of humanity to the higher rank of the nation, and the other to the vulgar and the mariners. I believe the same character holds good to this day amongst any people who are much addicted to sea-affairs; they contract a roughness, by being secluded from the more general converse of mankind, and consequently are strangers to that affability, which is the effect of a more enlarged conversation. But what is it that inclines the Phæacians to be censorious? It is to be remembered, that they are every where described as a people abandoned to idleness; to idleness therefore that part of their character is to be imputed. When the thoughts are not employed upon *things*, it is usual to turn them upon *persons*: a good man has not the inclination, an industrious man not the leisure to be censorious; so that censure is the property of idleness. This I take to be the moral intended to be drawn from the character of the Phæacians.

v. 331. *What stranger this, whom thus Nauficæa leads?*] This is an instance of the great art of Homer, in saying every thing properly. Nauficæa had conceived a great esteem for Ulysses, and she had an inclination to let

" Or rather some descendant of the skies ; 335
 " Won by her pray'r, th' aerial bridegroom flies.
 " Heav'n on that hour his choicest influence shed,
 " That gave a foreign spouse to crown her bed !
 " All, all the god-like worthies that adorn
 " This realm, she flies : Phæacia is her scorn." 340
 And just the blame ; for female innocence
 Not only flies the guilt, but shuns th' offence :

him know it ; but modesty forbid her to reveal it openly :
 how then shall Ulysses know the value she has for his
 person, consistently with the modesty of Nauficæa ? Ho-
 mer with great address puts her compliments in the
 mouth of the Phæacians, and by this method she speaks
 her own sentiments, as the sentiments of the Phæacians :
 Nauficæa, as it were, is withdrawn, and a whole nation
 introduced for a more general praise of Ulysses.

v. 335. *Or rather some descendant of the skies.*] Eustathius
 remarks, that the compliments of Nauficæa answer the
 compliments made to her by Ulysses : he resembled her
 to Diana, she him to the Gods. But it may be asked,
 are not both these extravagancies ? and is it not beyond
 all credibility that Nauficæa should be thought a Goddess,
 or Ulysses a God ? In these ages it would be judged
 extravagant, but it is to be remembered that in the
 days of Homer every grove, river, fountain, and oak-
 tree, were thought to have their peculiar deities : this
 makes such relations as these more reconcileable, if not
 to truth, at least to the opinions of antiquity, which is
 sufficient for poetry.

Th' unguarded virgin, as unchaste, I blame;
 And the least freedom with the sex is shame,
 'Till our consenting fires a spouse provide, 345
 And publick nuptials justify the bride.

V. 344. — *the least freedom with the sex is shame,
 'Till our consenting fires a spouse provide.*]

This is an admirable picture of ancient female life among the Orientals; the virgins were very retired, and never appeared amongst men but upon extraordinary occasions, and then always in the presence of the father or mother: but when they were married, says Eustathius, they had more liberty. Thus Helen converses freely with Telemachus and Pisistratus, and Penelope sometimes with the suitors. Nausicaa delivers her judgment sententiously, to give it more weight; what can be more modest than these expressions? And yet they have been greatly traduced by Monsieur Perrault, a French critick; he translates the passage so as to imply that "Nausicaa disapproves of a virgin's lying with a man, without the permission of her father, before marriage;" ἀνδράσι μιτσεσθαι led him into this mistake, which is sometimes used in such a signification, but here it only means *conversation*: if the word μιτσεσθαι signified more than keeping company, it would be more ridiculous, as Boileau observes upon Longinus, than Perrault makes it: for it is joined to ἀνδράσι, and then it would infer, that Nausicaa disapproves of a young woman's lying with *several men* before she was married, without the licence of her father. The passage, continues Boileau, is full of honour and decency: Nausicaa has a design to introduce Ulysses to her father: she tells him, she goes before to prepare the way for his reception; but that she must not be seen to enter the city

But would'st thou soon review thy native plain?
 Attend, and speedy thou shalt pass the main:
 Nigh where a grove with verdant poplars crown'd,
 To Pallas sacred, shades the holy ground, 350
 We bend our way: a bubbling fount distils
 A lucid lake, and thence descend in rills;

in his company, for fear of giving offence, which a modest woman ought not to give: a virtuous woman is obliged not only to avoid immodesty, but the appearance of it; and for her part she could not approve of a young woman keeping company with men without the permission of her father or mother, before she was married. Thus the indecency is not in Homer, but in the critick: it is indeed, in Homer, an excellent lecture of modesty and morality.

v. 347. *But would'st thou soon review thy native plain?*]
 Eustathius and Dacier are both of opinion, that Nausicaa had conceived a passion for Ulysses: I think this passage is an evidence that she rather admired and esteemed, than loved him; for it is contrary to the nature of the passion to give directions for the departure of the person beloved, but rather to invent excuses to prolong his stay. It is true Nausicaa had wished in the foregoing parts of this book, that she might have Ulysses for her husband, or such a husband as Ulysses: but this only shews that she admired his accomplishments, nor could she have added *such a spouse as he* at all, if her affections had been engaged and fixed upon Ulysses only. This likewise takes off the objection of too great a fondness in Nausicaa; for it might have appeared too great a fondness to have fallen in love at the first with an absolute stranger.

310 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book VI.

Around the grove a mead with lively green
 Falls by degrees, and forms a beauteous scene ;
 Here a rich juice the royal vineyard pours ; 355
 And there the garden yields a waste of flow'rs.
 Hence lies the town, as far as to the ear
 Floats a strong shout along the waves of air.
 There wait embow'rd, while I ascend alone
 To great Alcinous on his royal throne. 360
 Arriv'd, advance impatient of delay,
 And to the lofty palace bend thy way :
 The lofty palace overlooks the town,
 From ev'ry dome by pomp superiour known ;
 A child may point the way. With earnest gait 365
 Seek thou the queen along the rooms of state ;
 Her royal hand a wond'rous work designs,
 Around a circle of bright damsels shines,
 Part twist the threads, and part the wool dispose,
 While with the purple orb the spindle glows. 370
 High on a throne, amid the Scherian pow'rs,
 My royal father shares the genial hours :
 But to the queen thy mournful tale disclose,
 With the prevailing eloquence of woes :

v. 373. *But to the queen thy mournful tale disclose.*] This little circumstance, seemingly of small importance, is not without its beauty. It is natural for a daughter to apply to the mother, rather than the father: women are likewise generally of a compassionate nature, and therefore the poet first interests the queen in the cause of Ulysses. At the same time he gives a pattern of conjugal affection between Arete and Alcinous.

Book VI. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 311

So shalt thou view with joy thy natal shore, 375
Tho' mountains rise between, and oceans roar.

She added not, but waving as she wheel'd
The silver scourge, it glitter'd o'er the field :
With skill the virgin guides th' embroider'd rein,
Slow rolls the car before th' attending train. 380
Now whirling down the heav'ns, the golden day
Shot thro' the western clouds a dewy ray ;
The grove they reach, where from the sacred shade
To Pallas thus the pensive hero pray'd. 384

Daughter of Jove ! whose arms in thunder wield
Th' avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield ;
Forsook by thee, in vain I fought thy aid
When booming billows clos'd above my head :
Attend, unconquer'd Maid ! accord my vows,
Bid the great hear, and pitying heal my woes. 390

This heard Minerva, but forbore to fly
(By Neptune aw'd) apparent from the sky :

v. 391. — — — — *but forbore to fly*
(By Neptune aw'd) apparent from the sky.]

We see the ancients held a subordination among the Deities, and though different in inclinations, yet they act in harmony: one God resists not another Deity. This is more fully explained, as Eustathius observes, by Euripides, in his Hippolytus; where Diana says, it is not the custom of the Gods to resist one the other, when they take vengeance even upon the favourites of other Deities. The late tempest that Neptune had raised for the destruction of Ulysses, was an instance of Neptune's implacable anger: this makes Minerva take such measures as to avoid an open

312 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book VI.

Stern God! who rag'd with vengeance unrestrain'd,
'Till great Ulysses hail'd his native land.

opposition, and yet consult the safety of Ulysses: she descends, but it is secretly.

This book takes up part of the night, and the whole thirty-second day; the vision of Nausicaa is related in the preceding night, and Ulysses enters the city a little after the sun sets in the following evening.

This book in general is full of life and variety: it is true, the subject of it is simple and unadorned, but improved by the poet, and rendered entertaining and noble. The muse of Homer is like his Minerva, with respect to Ulysses, who from an object of commiseration improves his majesty, and gives a grace to every feature.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



